

# the Innis Herald

## Goodbye, Uncle Cam

### Tribute to Professor Cam Tolton

KAREN LIU

*American Film: Sound to Cinemascope's* last lecture was held on Wednesday, April 4th, 2001, marking the end of the long-running course, and much more significantly, the end of an era. Professor Cam Tolton gave his last lecture at the University of Toronto to a select group of students fortunate enough to have made the enrolment in his last class. I for one would recall the throngs of students who would audit the course, content to overflow the aisles and available floor space, just to hear him speak. At the end of the hour, as Professor Tolton concluded the course with showing that every Hollywood film follows the same narrational form as the *Odyssey* (in that every protagonist went on some kind of journey), but most of all, his intense love and enthusiasm for his material. The room burst into applause, recognizing the privilege of having been trained by one of the greats in Cinema Studies. The Great "Uncle Cam" Tolton retired from his role as Professor, not weekly, but raising the bar to new heights and roaring ahead to his future in Paris with his wife, also a Professor with the University of Toronto, Catherine Grisé, who, too, made important contributions to the Department of French.

The University of Toronto is no stranger to Cam Tolton. He completed his undergraduate studies at Victoria College in 1958 with an Honours Degree in Latin and French. He went on to attain his Master's (1959) and Ph.D. (1965) from Harvard in Romance Languages and Literature, and did his thesis on the Nobel Prize winning author, André Gide. He returned to Toronto, started teaching at U of T in French in 1964, and taught the Introduction to Film course (VIC112Y) at Victoria College in 1973-74.

Professor Tolton began substituting American Classical Cinema for the Intro course in alternate years from 1976-77, cementing the presence of Cinema Stud-



ies as a discipline at U of T. From the 1980s, after a year spent studying Film Semiotics in Paris in the seminars of Christian Metz, Raymond Bellour, Michel Marie, Jacques Aumont, Noel Burch and others, Professor Tolton expanded his range and taught courses on *Contemporary Film Theory*, *French Cinema*, and a graduate seminar on the Cinema of Jean Cocteau.

Cam states, "of course, I tried to incorporate film screenings into my French courses wherever appropriate," a reflection that this man is no mere cinephile, but a multi-disciplinary scholar to be reckoned with.

Publications continued throughout his career on Gide, and Professor Tolton was able to discover much about Gide's relation to the film world that he wrote up in a series of articles. Film related books he has published are Gide's adaptation of the screenplay of his novel *Isabelle*, and a collection of essays on *The Cinema Of Jean Cocteau*.

Apart from his substantial work for the

French Department, Professor Tolton's first love became the Cinema Studies Program. He was Acting Director for a year-and-a-half during the Wendy Rolph years, and then took over as Director (1994-99). He reminisces, "at first, in the early 1970s we financed the film screenings by collecting 'screening fees' from the students so we could rent films. As the years went by, the AudioVisual Library purchased more film prints. Now, of course, they are replacing real film prints with videos, then laser discs, and now DVDs. I have always preferred film for its authenticity and original resolution. But there is no denying that a crisp DVD is better than a scratched worn-out print."

Not only is Professor Tolton tantamount in making Cinema Studies a recognized discipline on campus, he also attracted some key guests to his classes. He has brought such journalists as Betty Lee, Martin Knelman, the late Jay Scott, and Peter Goddard. Filmmakers like Robert Wise, David Cronenberg, Atom Egoyan, and

INSIDE: POETRY, CONCERT,  
CD & FILM REVIEWS,  
OPINIONS

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Ron Mann made time to come to the University, as well as actresses Susan Rubes and Lois Maxwell (Miss Moneypenny in many James Bond films).

Professor Tolton is also known for his penchant for storytelling, a gift that packed his classrooms. Cam recalls, "In the early days they [the guest speakers] were rewarded with a cheap lunch. After the Faculty of Arts and Science gave us a budget, we could muster up a \$100 as an honorarium. The French theorist Raymond Bellour, passing through Toronto, wouldn't come for such a low sum. Nor in a class, but at an Innis Forum in 1980, Jean-Luc Godard was the hardest guest to deal with. He refused to speak during an hour's wait while his film *Tout Va Bien* (which he disclaimed as his own) was being screened. In front of the mikes and a packed house, however, he brightened up, only to clam up at the reception that followed. I was his host through all of this since I was able to converse in French. NO language could have made that guy friendly!"

Professor Anne Lancashire, admired Cam's "ability to take things with appropriate academic seriousness but with a lot of fun." She saw that Professor Tolton carried pure enjoyment in what he did, that he liked to have fun while taking the department seriously, and that like her, fought for American Cinema to be taken seriously as material to be considered. Without these two devoted "Americanists," as described by Professor Lancashire, we would not have the popular courses which are always filled to capacity: *Contemporary Popular American Film*, the *Science Fiction and Fantasy Film* course, and of course, *American Film: Sound To Cinemascope*.

It is perhaps because of the dedication of

*Continued on page 13*

# the Innis Herald

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# U of T Students take on International Development

## ALISON CHICK

Statistics are compelling - 1 billion people lack access to potable water, an estimated 100 million landmines are scattered worldwide, the United Nations recognizes 39 million refugees, and almost 2 billion people live without electricity - but these statistics fail to effectively convey the magnitude of the problem, countless individuals suffering unnecessarily, men, women and children without food, water, security, sanitation, or medical care. While so many people struggle in the developing world, university students are largely an untapped resource that can offer creativity and enthusiasm.

An exciting new organization on campus is approaching international development with a problem-solving mindset. Open to all students in all fields of study, Engineers Without Borders (EWB) is an international, non-profit organization, passionate about improving the quality of life of individuals in developing communities. Engineering students at U of T have joined this cause and started their own EWB chapter. EWB-UofT is now one of 17 chapters worldwide facilitating research, coordinating projects and offering internships in the developing world. The focus is on the use of appropriate technology in sustainable, community-driven development. And the response on-campus is overwhelming!

Membership is available to all university students, academics and professional engineers. In its inaugural year, EWB-UofT has already attracted over 70 paid members and over 200 associate members. Hans Kunov, a Biomedical Engineer specializing in acoustics and Barry Adams, the Chair of Civil Engineering have become faculty advisors. EWB UofT has selected a delegation of 21 students to participate at the EWB International conference at McGill University in January 2002.

The chapter has organized a lecture series with speakers including Thomas Homer Dixon, His Excellency John Ralston Saul, and Dr. James Orbinski of MSF. Speakers in the future may include prominent organizations like Doctors Without Borders, and the International Development Research Council, as well

as the Canadian International Development Agency.

Most importantly, EWB UofT has launched projects. EWB-UofT is sponsoring a team of students competing in the Mines Action Canada design competition. The team will be developing smart technology to assist in the humanitarian demining effort. The Tools For Development Project involves collecting used equipment and computers, fixing them and sending them to the developing world. The Light Up The World project is a joint initiative of all EWB chapters. The goal is to implement power-efficient lighting sources in villages throughout India, Nepal and Sri Lanka, so children can study in the evening. With the Huarina Water Project, the EWB-UofT chapter is working with the small community of Huarina, Bolivia, helping them create a potable water system. We are currently conducting water analyses and planning a fieldwork intern-

ship. Three students from U of T will be participating in EWB internships this spring. One will be developing information technology in India while the other two will be doing infrastructure work on a refugee camp in Zambia.

There are many ways to contribute your skills and talents to EWB. The finances department is always interested in finding students with business savvy to help look for financial sponsorships and to fundraise for the organization. Computer and graphic design skills are always welcome to maintain the website. Writers can contribute stories and ideas to the EWB newsletter to spread awareness of international concerns and new innovations. Students with enthusiasm are welcome to pursue a project through EWB to improve the quality of life in third world countries. If you are interested in getting involved with EWB-UofT, please visit the website at [www.ewb-isf.org/toronto](http://www.ewb-isf.org/toronto).

Innis Residence Council  
Presents

*Allure* 2002  
Charity Fashion Show

Saturday, March 2nd  
Sunday, March 3rd  
7pm

At Innis College, Town Hall  
2 Sussex Ave.

Proceeds to benefit  
Camp Oochigas  
Innis Residence

tickets on  
sale now

CAMP OOCHEGAS  
PHOTOGRAPH BY LO

## 2001. 2002.

MARI CHIJIWA

Gotten used to writing 2002 yet?

There is always something refreshing about a new year. New courses, new books, new ideas and new goals. With the exam frenzy done and over with, I hope you were all able to relax and enjoy the holidays. There is nothing more satisfying than giving your mind a break; one of which we all deserved (give yourself a pat on the back, or two thumbs up – whichever tickles your fancy!). Although the holidays were peaceful, I thoroughly enjoyed spending time with close friends and family. One of the highlights of my winter break, was going to watch the on-stage Mirvish production of *The Lion King*. There were so many breathless moments and the creativity behind the show was beyond my scope of possibilities imaginable. It provides such an inspiration towards how strong one's mindset can be in producing such an extravagant theatrical production.

The snow has finally hit, and walking through the deep snow has made me value what the streets were like without the snow. I hope most of you haven't hurt yourselves too much from all the shoveling. A hot bath usually remedies lower back pain, so I've heard. One of our neighbours owns a killer snow-blowing machine and kindly used it to clear the snow from my family's driveway. Had they not, I would have had to get out the ole' shovel and start digging myself – not a pleasant site. Random acts of kindness really do make a difference. At least in my world, they do.

This issue of the Herald reflects much of the on-goings from the holidays, among the many who contribute to the Herald. A great start to the new year! And, if you're starting to feel the stress crunch all over again, just think... *Hakuna Matata*.

## Opera Rocks

LAURA BIL

This month I got a deal on tickets to the dress rehearsals of the COC's Salome and Journey to Reims from the Graduate Drama Centres' mailing list. I'm not an opera buff at all but I love seeing these people sing, it is so otherworldly to see.

Salome is a classic myth on the vengeance in unreturned passions and the irreparable damage done when innocence is lost. Film director Atom Egoyan directed it using whimsical elements of film and projection that had us feeling the story on a gut level.

Journey to Reims is a rarely staged spectacle that requires 14 first-rate soloists, and follows the trials and tribulations of a bunch of people who plan to leave the spa for a day to see the Coronation of the King. Despite the fluffy story, the show was altogether watchable, I never figured I'd see opera stars acting like clowns in such a natural way.

All in all, it was fun. I think opera holds good first-date potential as a conversation-starter and as an art form too, in challenging both its participants and observers alike.

## Landscapes of the Mind

NATALIA REID

Peter Doig's exhibition, now showing at the Power Plant, experiments with our idea of man's place in nature. The large canvases are filled with dream-like sequences that force the viewer to become engulfed by the mesmerizing images. They hark back to the ideas of the subconscious mind explored by the Surrealists. The works allow us to immerse ourselves into the mind of the painter, yet they apply to our own lives by evoking strong emotions within us. Doig himself refers to the implicit autobiographical elements in his works. After viewing the show you feel as though you have caught a glimpse of the artist's psyche. It is as if we have ventured into his dream-state, and are interpreting what has occurred, paying homage to Freud.

Doig actually does not work entirely from his imagination, nor does he work en plein air. He uses a collection of images in creating a single work, combining and altering them with his creative instincts. It appears as though Doig looks at a picture and breaks it up into contours, in order to create less definition between the lines, almost as if it were a water colour work. He refers to the images as "an almost idealized idea of the wilderness experience." Thus, he has created a world in which we can experience nature in a personal way.

This eclectic means of creating lends to Doig's multiple influences. From the Group of Seven to Jackson Pollock, Peter Doig combines the qualities of a number of artists to his work and then adds upon them. Edvard Munch's work appears to have greatly influenced him. The image of a man reflecting on his emotions caught in the abyss of wilderness is common to both of their works. Even the bright colours, mingling together with muted ones, are reminiscent of Munch.

Doig's show is extremely captivating and thought provoking. His surrealist perspective on nature is a refreshing approach to a traditional subject matter. The paintings are successful because of their intimate nature, and universality.

On until March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2002  
Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery  
231 Queen's Quay  
free on Wednesdays from 5-8pm

## Papiers à la Mode: Illusions of Fashion

MARI CHIJIWA

Over the holidays, I had read about an exhibition going on at the Royal Ontario Museum, in search of appealing events going on in the GTA. Entitled, *Papiers à la Mode: Illusions of Fashion*, I had no expectations as to what would be showcased. When I see a piece of paper, I immediately associate it with school. Countless numbers of page leaflets used for lecture notes, assignments and other academic purposes encompass my mind. Back in elementary school, however, paper had a different significance for me. I recall becoming self-indulged in perfecting my origami skills, attempting to be 'Sadako' by folding nearly 1000 cranes. Perhaps this childhood memory is what allowed myself to appreciate the creativity and explorations behind the extent to which a simple piece of paper can hold.

Normally, when developing any form of fashion piece, paper patterns are used to formulate sketches that serve as the template for the final product. However, the two artists behind *Papiers à la Mode: Illusions of Fashion* have taken the basic fundamentals of fashion an extra step further. Isabelle de Borchgrave and Rita Brown have innovatively used paper as their actual medium in creating 33 astonishing life-size costumes dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Working as a functional team, de Borchgrave first paints the material prints, which in turn are used by Brown, who cuts and produces the final costume design. Much of the artists' inspirations have come from other costume exhibitions in international locations such as London, Kyoto and New York.

As you enter the well-lit exhibition room, a serenely beautiful wedding dress intricately designed with a shawl of lace used as a backdrop faces you. Up close, the dress takes the form of an optical illusion to say the least. The variety of materials normally used in fashion production

(cotton, lace, silk, chiffon) have all been carefully hand printed to portray realism not only in the focal points of the costume, but also in the other accents of detail created by de Borchgrave and Brown. Accessories such as shoes, purses, hats and fans all help to complete the ideal setting in which the costumes belong. To go along with each piece, side notes are posted so that the viewer can understand where the artists' inspiration for the dress came from, as well as what materials were used. It is surprising to realize how with such a simple range of crafting mediums (craft glue, drafting paper, paper kitchen towels, lens cleaning tissue paper, crepe paper, pleated packing paper), a whole array of fashion items can be made!

Although the *Papiers à la Mode: Illusions of Fashion* exhibition has just finished running at the Royal Ontario Museum, the creativity of de Borchgrave and Brown has not run out quite yet. The artists are currently working on a kimono collection, which will be showcased in Japan in the future, alongside other commitments including costume designs for many theatrical productions. Both de Borchgrave and Brown have evidently made the modern connection between paper and fashion a definite fashion statement in itself.

Other Upcoming Exhibitions at the ROM associated with Fashion culture:

**Summer 2002 - Unveiling the Textiles & Costume Collection** (featuring the ROM's cross-cultural 50,000-piece costume and textiles collection pieces)

**Autumn 2002 - Elite Elegance: Couture in the Feminine Fifties** (featuring the ROM's 1950s haute couture collection pieces)

For more information, visit the ROM's website at: [www.rom.on.ca](http://www.rom.on.ca)

## Write for us!

Email innisherald@yahoo.com  
Deadline for submissions:  
March 10

# Daniel Brooks Gently Directs UC's Bacchae

Laura Bil

In directing UC's presentation of Euripides' *Bacchae*, director Daniel Brooks, UofT alum and now Artist in Residence at the Tarragon, was balancing teaching and directing. "It was gently directed. It was all about the actors and their relationship to the text — the text moves through them."

"We aimed for a clear reading of the play. We allowed whatever images that came up, to form themselves. I usually direct from a language of images, but *Bacchae* is led by the actors and their relationship to the text. This was the teaching part of the project."

*Bacchae* is full of complex questions that come fast and furious as Dionysus takes his gruesome vengeance out on Thebes. "*Bacchae* addresses the human weakness and arrogance in believing we are all able to control nature, history, or the world around us."

In this way the play is relevant to contemporary audiences and even suggestive of the current political state. Brooks calls *Bacchae* a "theatrical mirage... As Dionysus plays with Pentheus, he also plays with our minds. It is a play about mass delusion."

Yet Brooks wanted to avoid any overarching interpretations. "The goal was to find a way into the play for each student. We experimented a lot, used improvisation. It is a humble presentation of a beautiful text. Theatre involves scratching at an idea without much in the way of time or resources. My passion is to work one step at a time, not to miss any steps, not faking it."

"The nature of the play is unfamiliar and the dramaturgy is presentational, so the students were making discoveries all along the way. A lot of it was learning how to work with an audience. A young actor can have a great opening night. The next night he may still be living in the performance from the night before and then everything can change. How to move from there is a lot to learn for an actor."

# A Moving Dance to the Theme of Mortality

Danica Lam

The title of the experimental dance-theatre work, *Mortality*, speaks for itself. Conceived and directed by Ross Manson and choreographed by Kate Alton for Volcano, *Mortality* is a meditation on death through the media of movement and text. It recently concluded a short run at the Theatre Centre on Queen Street West.

Manson came up with the idea after reading poet Steven Dobyns, and commissioned pieces from acclaimed writer on the theme of mortality. The result, which brings together some of the best in the country's literary and artistic worlds, is a thoughtful and surprisingly joyful work structured around these pieces, with Dobyns's poetry, performed by actor Martin Julien's narrator, connecting them.

The tiny theatre placed the audience in chairs while the performers danced and spoke while on the floor — there was no stage — right in front of them. This intimacy was further heightened by the simplicity of the set — just a few tables and chairs with a phonograph — which was predominantly and intriguingly white in colour. John Gzowski, son of the late Peter Gzowski, composed the music for the work.

Canadian novelist Paul Quarlington's piece, performed by Toronto dancer Julia Aplin, opened the evening, exploring the moment when a child first realizes that she is capable of dying. Aplin

is more of a dancer than an actor, if her slightly overwrought delivery of Quarlington's text was any indication. She made up for this with her endearing interpretation of Alton's choreography, however, with its portrayal of the awkwardness and vulnerability of the end of childhood.

The work continued to improve as the evening went on, with playwright Tomson Highway's loving contemplation of the death of his brother and the possibility of a life after death. Actor and musician George Leach spoke quietly and with the impression of enormous emotional control, so that when he broke into a song of lament, with an astonishingly powerful voice, it was all the more moving.

At the end, Aplin returned to draw him into a tender and joyous *pas de deux*, which would provide the contrast of youth against the maturity of the next piece of the evening. It was written by Pulitzer Prize-winning Carol Shields, who, just weeks after agreeing to create the piece, was diagnosed with cancer, which she is undergoing treatment for. This sad irony imbued Shields' piece with especial poignancy.

In it, her character (portrayed by Peggy Baker, a legend in modern dance) muses on the moment of death and how one prepares for it. Eventually, she decides that, "the moment of death occurs while we are still alive. Life

marches up to that wall of darkness." Baker, with her long, fluid, impossibly expressive arms, demonstrated here why she is considered one of Canada's greatest performing artists. Eventually, she was joined by Martin Julien, but their *pas de deux* was stricken and desperate where Leach and Aplin's had been hopeful. At the end, Julien was left with outstretched arms reaching but empty, while Baker left him standing alone in front of the audience.

The work closed with Julien's narrator telling a story of a world where "Death withdrew to an underground garage. He was still young and his work was distasteful." Without the counterpoint of loss, people grew less beautiful. Death — not life — became a miracle. Finally, "a little group met Death in a white room and said, 'We adore you and will not live without you.'" And so creatures began to die again, the small ones at first, and then the birds. As they fell out of the sky, they were met with "cries of welcome."

*Mortality* ends on this beautiful note, performers and audience facing each other in a white room as white feathers are scattered on the ground. Having contemplated the nature of mortality and the manner in which it moves beside us throughout our lives, we come to no conclusion other than the necessity of eventually facing Death if we wish to truly live — but this is, quite possibly, enough.

## sports

### Half-Full or Half-Empty?

Brian Shin

Is the cup half-full or half-empty? With the significant moves made in the offseason, no one could have anticipated the Raptors to struggle as much as they have so far this season. The team appears to be suffering from some sort of Jekyll and Hyde complex. On some nights they dominate their opponents, resembling the physical and defensive-minded team that just missed the Eastern Conference finals last year, and that endeared itself to fans and management (who consequently dished out \$250 million over the summer to keep the team intact). But what's happened on most nights this season, is that

they refuse to play defense, take poor shots on offense, and lack any sustained intensity on the court.

So what exactly is the problem? One argument is that the offseason signings that secured the future of the Raptors, made the team feel *too comfortable*. A general phenomena that plagues most modern-day sports, is that when players are rewarded with lucrative, long-term contracts, a sense of complacency emerges. And as aforementioned, the team has struggled with its intensity all season long, especially in the Air Canada Center. Another argument is that the coach, Lenny Wilkens, is not the man to take

the team to the next level. He may have the most wins for a coach in the history of the NBA, but he's not far off either from having the most losses either. Lenny has been criticized for the team's follies, including rushed shots, lackadaisical defense, poor play against zone defenses, and what appears to be a total lack of preparation. One final argument that has been debated is that the teams' franchise player, Vince Carter, is too soft and that he needs to become more of a leader, both with his words and actions. Pundits argue that his increasing reliance on the jump shot hurts his team, even if you can't tell by his numbers. Support for this argument is that the Raptors are among the 5 worst teams in

the league in terms of getting to the free-throw line. The real problem is probably a mix of the above, with each issue further compounding to form a larger problem.

But despite all this, the Raptors find themselves in the midst of a run, and recently leapfrogged the Boston Celtics to claim third place in the Eastern Conference standings. As of late, the team has been playing more consistently on both ends of the floor, and while some deficiencies are still lingering around, all things considered, the team is playing their best ball all season. Keon Clark has emerged as a legitimate presence, and the insertion of the Junk Yard Dog, Jerome Williams, into

the starting lineup has given the team a new edge defensively and the intensity they've been lacking all season long. And on top of all this, the Raptors have been fighting a case of the injury bug. When Morris Peterson and Hakeem Olajuwon return from the injured list, the Raptors will be able to claim to have the deepest team in the East again. So don't expect General Manager Glen Grunwald to make any moves when the trade deadline approaches. He's been adamant all season long that the cup is "half-full." To paraphrase the GM, it's better to be 5 games above .500 and wonder what's wrong, than to be a few games under .500 and be satisfied.

# Savage Love

DANIEL DEES

## Chapter 3 - Finale

The gates flew open, our fury was raised,  
Valhalla began to roar.  
Legions of men came rushing out,  
My heart still empty and soar.

Ragnarok had come, the prophecy was true,  
The skies were black with hate.  
Blood reigned supreme throughout the land,  
Curse this bloody fate!

Warriors from Hell gathered around,  
Villages destroyed with flames.  
I set forth in battle to fight,  
Her love I would claim!

In the midst of battle I left the pack,  
I ran towards her village.  
I prayed that it was not too late,  
I hoped it was not pillaged.

Then my heart warmed and rose,  
As I saw it in my path.  
Yet the villagers were leaving from fear and angst,  
Escaping Loki's wrath.

Knowing my chances, accepting my fate,  
Into her heart I walked in.  
My love for her was greater and strong,  
Such love is sin!

The village was untouched and left alone,  
But Ragnarok was spreading fast.  
I searched for my love quickly now,  
I prayed peace would last.

Ahead she stood, bags by her side,  
Chaos she wished to flee.  
I watched her in the distance now,  
My face she would soon see!

From the depths of Valhalla I had come,  
The betrayal of Wotan in mind.  
Everything I'd done came to this,  
Brief happiness I would find!

To her I walked with my sword away,  
My heart began to quiver.  
Kneeling down and washing clothes,  
Her hands dipped in the river.

I came to her side quietly, slowly savoring every moment. I felt the wind against my hair, I smelled the oncoming death, and I knew these would be our final moments. My hand gently touched her shoulder, and what I had come for turned to me...

She looked at me in great pain,  
Surprise written across her face.  
I smiled, I cried, and even laughed,  
How I longed for her embrace!

We both were speechless, mouths unable to move,  
Our eyes said it all.  
We agreed to appease our longing hunger,  
Right before the fall.

Yet as our eyes met, something was wrong,  
Darkness came from above!  
Ragnarok had come, death was present,  
It stole the woman I loved!

I lay there crying and beating the ground,  
All that I had was gone!  
My love had been killed right before my eyes,  
Our fate was vicious and wrong!

Nothing to live for, no one to love,  
I again felt death's cold touch.  
I reached for the sword by my side,  
Her death now my crutch!

With my strength, and overwhelming rage,  
I ran towards the demons.  
My sword slid through their blackened hearts,  
Her death my only reason!

Silence surrounded me, I had survived, but was facing a fate worse than death. Seeing my crying lover on the ground, I quickly came to her side. She was gasping for air, and knowing that she was to soon die, I draped my arms around her. We cried for what seemed like an eternity, both holding onto what we loved. Then she slipped, and my quest was over for she was no more...

Sinking into desperate agony,  
Pain was my coat.  
I took the sword with blood upon it,  
I put it through my throat!

Falling back on the ground,  
I thought of my life gone wrong  
I wanted to be with her in death,  
A place I surely belong!

Yet nothing happened, I felt little,  
The sword simply stayed!  
No blood at all, no pain to bear,  
I just would not fade!

I pushed the sword in deeper now,  
But my soul still remained!  
I thought of never dying again,  
Tears began to reign.

"What is the meaning of this! There is no purpose for me, let me die!"

Is this punishment for my betrayal,  
For fleeing the final fight?  
I curse Wotan and the Gods,  
May they never see the light!

Panic and shock overtook my soul,  
Midgard I wished to leave.  
But no matter where the sword went in,  
I continued to breathe!

How long must I stay like this,  
Please someone let me die.  
I love her...

Let me die...  
What have I done...

*This is the conclusion to the poem Savage Love. The first two parts appeared in earlier issues of the Herald.*

# these are body sounds

COREY KATZ

"he entered the silent room  
walls of silence made of foam  
as he listened to the nothing, he heard two sounds  
one high pitched and one low pitched  
after he exited he asked the engineer  
what these two sounds were, since silence was the  
room's goal  
the man said  
the high sound  
was your nervous system in operation  
and the low sound  
was your blood in circulation"  
these are body sounds  
these are beat frequencies

# Man

JFKRYST

You are an island  
Shores of perception  
Protect you  
From dry objective oceans  
Which threaten you  
With fact, truth  
& Other impediments  
But alone you are trapped  
In consciousness  
Upon an island of subjectivity  
Where no truth can be found  
But your own

# Warm Winter Epic

JFKRYST

There is no winter this year  
The earth is too warm  
It is rapidly becoming all too clear  
We are rapidly causing serious harm  
It is January 23rd & there is no snow  
Our Earth is losing its charm  
The stars have lost their starry glow  
Roads pipes & smoke diminishing Earth's dim light  
Too fragile now to withstand another nuclear blow  
As nuclear power plants shine bright in the night  
There's no winter this year still, no snow, as you all know  
As TV neglects to show, our planet is suffocating to capitalist delight

There are no ice-glazed sidewalks this winter  
The sound of the fall leaves that still rustle  
Leaves resounding tremors on my mind as it splinters  
Further into winter, as ants hurriedly hustle  
Through the unusually warm winter streets  
Where Mr. Fall for the first time Mr. Spring meets  
Where remnants of green grass do sunlight greet  
Where the alley cats another day do survive  
But Humans for this planet's continued future do not strive  
They have no will to preserve, what they will never revive  
They hear not what I repeatedly holler, in unpublished silence, to the sky  
They bow only to one God—the all mighty dollar, for which they live & die

# Tenacious D: The Greatest Rock Band on Earth

JENNIFER SCOTT

On January 24, I saw the greatest band on earth, or so they would like me to believe. Self-proclaimed "Greatest Rock Show on Earth" Tenacious D played the Kool Haus, in an amazing display of acoustic genius. And the appearance of my favourite superhero, Spiderman, made the experience everything the D promised it would be.

Perhaps I should explain a little more. For most of you the name Tenacious D doesn't spark any light bulbs of recognition. The band is comprised of Kyle Gass and Jack Black. Yes, I said Jack Black. And you thought actors couldn't sing (we all did...down with Keanu Reeves and DogStar!).

The band has been together, in one form or another, for seventeen years. Originally, it was JB and KG (as they like to be referred to) jamming in Kyle's studio apartment on Cochran Avenue in Los Angeles, California. At some point, the two decided to pursue their musical talent and got their first gig at Al's Bar in Downtown L.A.

The crowd stopper then, as now, is their song *Tribute*, which tells the story of how they came up with the greatest rock song on earth. Of course, the actual song *Tribute* is not that song...it's merely a tribute to the greatest song on earth, as they can't remember how it went.

Soon after, the band went on to headline the comedy night at Pedro's, continuing their attempts to transcend the world of rock. Gass and Black had a short-lived T.V. show on HBO, which was soon replaced by some silly show called the Sopranos (Confused? I'm not familiar with it either). Eventually, the duo signed a record deal with Epic records and have been making music "history" ever since.

Their album, recorded at Neil Diamond's Ark Angel studio in L.A. debuted at number thirty-three on the Billboard 200 chart. The album featured such songs as *Tribute*, *Lee* (a tribute to an

obsessed fan who is now their backstage groupie), *Wonderboy*, and *Special Things*. Contributing to the album were names among the likes of Dave Grohl of the Foo Fighters, Page McConnell of Phish, Warren Fitzgerald of the Vandals, and the Dust Bros.

And even if Kyle Gass is an unfamiliar name to you, Jack Black, possibly the most amazing man ever, should not be. He has several film credits including *The Cable Guy*, *Bio Dome*, *High Fidelity*, *Saving Silverman*, *Shallow Hal* (with Gwyneth Paltrow), and *Orange County* released on January 11 of this year.

Now that you're caught up to speed let me say that the show at the Kool Haus was hilarity at its high point. Gass and Black performed several skits including Gass quitting the band (and rejoining forty-five seconds later), and Gass taking a bullet for Black. At one point, Black stood on a tower made of amps to give all the short people a chance to see the "full Jack." A humanitarian too!

When asked about their celebrity, Black only has one complaint: "A lot of people say [I look like] Val Kilmer. We have similar packages." Gass merely nods in agreement. Indeed, with lyrics like "It was a big day on Jesus Ranch/Jesus...I fell in love with a baked potato/And then I started to dance/Oh Yeah/In France," how could you not compare Jack Black to good ol' Val?

In an industry where money means more than the music and artists carry conceptions about how deep their music goes to the souls of its listeners, Tenacious D plays fun, silly music, the kind that makes you want to giggle. Some may call them crude, or childish, or obnoxious, or (gasp) lame, but at the heart of the matter, they are a lot less like the above descriptions and more like two guys with acoustic guitars becoming the greatest rock band on earth.

And, that being said, I only have two words...HORNET'S NEST!

# The Lowest Show on Earth

The New Yorker Theatre

Written by Scott Thompson &amp; Paul Bellini

Directed by Ted Dykstra  
January 23rd to February 3rd, 2002

Rating: HHHHH

KITANA ANANDA

A booming ringmaster boisterously announces the arrival of Scott Thompson's one-man show to an uneasy crowd. Following previews in the United States and a brief but successful run at Montreal's Just for Laughs festival, Thompson was rating to storm the hometown stage. Yet, the question remained: Could Toronto the Good handle the 'unimaginable depravity' of *The Lowest Show on Earth*?

Judging by the audience's resonating howls of laughter, the answer is, quite simply: Yes.

Thompson (*Kids in the Hall*, *Larry Sanders*), with his long-time collaborator, Paul Bellini (*This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, *Heyseed*) explores a human circus of low behaviour with a cast of eleven new characters and old favourites. A quick look at the show's

program suggests an unconventional experience; refreshingly, career low points serve as artist profiles in place of self-promoting bios. Equal parts spectacle, song-and-dance, and incisive social and political commentary, *The Lowest Show* is a clever satire of modern North American culture.

A sub-plot of high-school shootings serves as the narrative thread that weaves this brilliant series of character sketches together. Thompson shines especially bright as Rebecca Fleck, a grief counselor whose guerrilla-style tactics take loving thy neighbor literally, with the assistance of a well-endowed sock monkey named Pookie.

Labeled a "shock comic" by some, Thompson doesn't seek to offend with the puerile antics of a morning zoo crew lampooned in one transition piece.

Instead, he reveals his true subversiveness by refusing to eviscerate his material with moral judgment of his characters and their experiences. For example, character Fran Wilson, protectively relates a story about a sexually violating "new cancer treatment,"

complicating matters when she feels pleasure during this unusual experience. Another character, Weston Esterhazy, evokes sympathetic derision when Thompson takes getting off on celebrity culture to its logical extreme.

Unsatisfied with Hollywood's gay tokenism, Thompson defies labels with his work. In a well-publicized finale, the infamous Buddy Cole broadens his homosexual horizons by exploring the female nude with Venus (Elizabeth Faure). Simultaneously objectifying and liberating, Thompson finds redemption in ambiguity as he ridicules and revels in the experience. His ability to present a hyperbolic reflection of our carnivalesque world with tenderness and empathy reveals an incisive understanding of human behaviour.

In fact, little is truly 'low' about *The Lowest Show*, save for one integral component - you. Taking note of the boozing voice's pre-show warning: "It's your stink. You brought it with you!"

Now deal with it.

## Critical Comparisons

### Charlatans and Starsailor

*Kool Haus*, January 25opening song, *Akaboli*, only moments earlier.

Starsailor's debut, *Love Is Here*, is packed with a number of powerful songs on love and relationships in general, toned down by the piano-stylings of band-member, Barry Westhead. This results in the many Coldplay comparisons (the album liner-notes for *Love Is Here* and Coldplay's *Parachutes*, are disturbingly similar, however I blame that on EMI, the label for both bands), but everyone's a critic. Sure, the songs could "sound" like Coldplay if you swapped Chris Martin's vocals for Walsh's, but the delivery -

masculine edge - in Walsh's performance would be lost. (Martin sings the way Walsh talks).

Simplified lyrics dominate. Yet don't sound as "cheesy" or contrived, as you'd expect them to, as is often the case, especially in the pop-music genre. *Good Souls*, *Poor Misguided Fool*, and *Tie Up My Hands*, made for an enjoyable performance, and increase in pleasure with repeated listens to the album - which I purchased a few days later.

Does being British count for

*continued on page 8*

### HERALD SCALE

- HHHHH - Will not leave your CD player
- HHHH - A good addition to any collection
- HHH - Borrow it from a friend
- HH - Can double as a drink coaster
- H - Great for target practice

# Last Goodbye Jeff Buckley Tribute Janet Jackson is All

MICHELE COSTA

The atmosphere inside the Rivoli was incredible. The sense of camaraderie between everyone inside – patrons and performers – was nothing short of electric. The people there had gathered to share their love for music that had touched them in a way nothing else seems capable of. They were there to remember a beautiful soul, and keep his artistry and genius alive. They were there for Jeff Buckley.

The event was called *For the Love of Buckley*, a 3-day tribute show that took place January 24<sup>th</sup>–16<sup>th</sup>, featuring local performers, friends of the late singer, and fans alike that had come together for one common love they all shared.

I had always hoped for an event like this in Toronto. Since Buckley's death in 1997 there have been numerous shows, such as this one all over America and Europe, but we had yet to show our appreciation in this fashion. I really had no idea what to expect and wasn't even sure I would enjoy seeing local musicians cover Jeff Buckley songs. I can't imagine how difficult it must be as a performer to attempt such a feat. The show was put together beautifully – from the second we walked into the room – it felt calming and warm.

Most of the singers and bands did a cover or two, and then some of their own material, including songs that were either written about Buckley, or inspired by him. It was a nice combination, and many of the non-covers were incredibly beautiful and well done. One of the first performers was a personal friend of Buckley's. He told a few stories about their relationship and the conversations they had, before singing songs he had written for Buckley. I think it was times like this that made the night what it was. It allowed us to feel like we were a bit closer to Buckley and the music.

The show started out with the organizer of the event singing *Satisfied Mind* – a beautiful rendition, and song well known for being played at Buckley's funeral. Many of the artists that followed were well-known local acts including, Sarah Slean, Kurt Swinghammer, Jian Ghomeshi, Kathryn Rose, Staggered Crossing, and many more. A performer on the first night, Mary Simon, by far one of my favourites from the event, covered Buckley in a unique, powerful feminine way that was striking and a slightly more freak than folk. Superhalo did a nice whispered version of the song *Opened Once*. National Anthem were strong rockers with great energy. It's a shame so many people had left prior to their performance, because they were fantastic. Saturday featured a terribly tall but very talented artist called Lindy whose voice can be described as nothing but sexy, and utterly perfect. Adam Wade Gontier from 3 Days Grace did an incredible and much appreciated cover of the lesser-known song, *Forget Her*.

There were inevitably a few bad parts to the event. On each night there was a band or two that spent up to 45 minutes on stage playing only their own material (one band somehow – as frightening as this is – did just that, combining metal with country western music), which sadly reduced the mood of the night.

Also, out of the 40 or more songs Buckley recorded,



almost all of the performers chose to cover the same songs. We ended up hearing around eight different renditions of *Hallelujah*, *Lover You Should've Come Over* and *Like Wine* on each night. What succeeded in making the crowd more appreciative, were the nicely covered performances of *Yard of Blonde Girls*, *Jewel Box*, and *Eternal Life*. I don't think the night could have ended on a better note than it did, with the final band Memory Bank, singing the much-loved *So Real*.

By far the most impressive and memorable cover performed is actually hard to describe, since I am still not sure of the logistics of the performance. It was a cover done by the stage manager of the event, Jonathan Seet, who actually resembled Buckley in a way that was eerie, with another musician on a drum-machine-like instrument, I have never seen nor heard before. It resulted a guitar-accompanied East-Indian style song in the style of Pakistani artist Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, of whom Buckley was known to be a huge admirer.

The highlight of the event for me, was when I realized a Englishman was there – an unexpected treat. He is one of my favourite artists, and to hear someone whose voice and music you love, cover a Jeff Buckley song...indescribable.

A large screen on the stage played clips from the "Jeff Buckley – Live In Chicago" DVD and which was a very nice addition to the live performances, especially for fans that had never seen the footage. (Although many other Innis residents can verify we watch the video constantly, seeing it on a large screen with huge sound and a room full of candles was an incredibly different experience.)

Jeff Buckley left only one album, an EP and a bunch of singles that were made into posthumous releases, but few artists have touched people the way he did. Fans of his music have a love for him that is eternal and a connection to each other that is unlike anything I have ever experienced. Most fans will agree, and it was a general theme touched upon during the weekend, that when you meet someone new, and learn they also love Buckley's music, you feel an instant connection and compassion for them. Fill a room with these people and a stage with artists singing his beautiful songs and its more surreal and spiritual than I ever thought music could be.

Jeff Buckley 1966 - 1997  
Rest in Peace

## For You

*A Naughty & Nice performance  
that made you beg for more*

Copps Coliseum - January 29

ROSEMARIE COLANGELO

Throw us some towels. Whether sweating because you couldn't stop grooving to beat or you couldn't handle those sexy abs, Janet Jackson surely left everyone breathless.

Nearly 9,000 avid fans gathered to witness the world's hottest Jackson prove her dominance over both music and hearts during her captivating, high-energy show.

The show was undoubtedly *All For You* as she and her extremely talented group of four female & four male dancers, two backup singers, and five band members produced the most innovative and engaging concert I have been to. I don't know if I could even label it as a "concert"; those adoring fans were made to feel as though they are the most important aspect of her musical career. We were all truly performing *with* our Favourite Female Pop / Rock Artist.

The excitement began when from atop an unbelievably high pedestal, Jackson and her flashy dance team were brought down to set an electrifying pace, opening with the pulsating *Come On Get Up*, through to *You Ain't Right* and the famed *All For You*.

A white sequenced suit and largely brimmed hat at first hid the singer's gorgeous smile, but by the third song, an enormous screen was revealed to let her audience feel even closer to one of the industry's legendary entertainers.

A well-diversified, ingenious array of themes was presented for a funky, hip-hop dance show sizzled with sex appeal and took us through a journey of love's trials and tribulations. Not forgetting her roots, she embraced many of the old favourites that have made her the Janet she is today.

Costumes suitably reflected the themes which ranged from traditionally glamorous dance gear, to whimsical Alice in Wonderland outfits, to edgy rock pieces, to the least revealing, yet most memorable costume – a slinky vinyl, cleavage-busting suit used to accentuate the seduction act.

Yes, there was seduction – and boy, was it bad. She paced the stage hunting for 'the one' whose arms and legs were then strapped to a table-like fixture that was raised vertically, ready for the dominatrix to begin her work. At that point the hollering of wild voyeurs was ceaseless. Pumping and grinding on places too naughty to mention, she sang, "I just wanna touch you, tease you, lick you, please you..." (that was the *tame* part of the song). The only thing separating the sweat-drenched man and Janet Jackson was a headset and strands of her hair whipping over his anxious face. I'm sure those parents who brought their eight-year-old children had some interesting questions asked after the show)

Sizzling dance routines complimented every musical note as Jackson treated both elements with equal importance. Although becoming somewhat worn out by the later half of the two-hour full-force performance, she fed on that loss of energy by letting her fans fuel parts of her songs with lines sung and cheers shouted. For that encouragement, words of "I love you so much, Hamilton and want to thank you very much," were said in a slightly fatigued voice. Jackson has been involved in quite a long demanding tour, which is expected to continue through to February 17, 2002 in Honolulu, Hawaii. It has been rumoured that this will be the 35-year-old diva's last tour.

As for Jackson's opening act, I cannot express as many praising comments for the R&B group, Ginuwine. They performed their notoriously famous songs, such as *Pov* and *Differences* quite well, and they almost had the audience engaged. However, their attempt at involving the men of the audience in a profession of devotion to "the women of the United States of America," the "boozing" couldn't be forgotten...until Miss Janet Jackson made her spectacular appearance a painstaking thirty-five minutes later.

Nevertheless, Jackson's impressive, slick performance was one not to be forgotten. I certainly hope that this isn't her final tour; it seems that a remarkable supply of energy and inspiration still remains to power many more years of influential, extraordinary music and live performance.

Besides, you can't miss your next chance to see Janet Jackson. You'll hate yourself for it.

# Agaetis Byrjun - Sigur Ros

Fat Cat/MCA  
Rating HHHHH

## ANANT MATHUR

What is art-rock? Art-rock is probably the most baffling genre of rock music. It's like a parasite that infects its victim and begins to alter the victim's perceptions. Many rock bands have fallen prey to this parasite, their artsy instinct, and have seen their sales plummet faster than the Dow Jones post September 11th. Very few bands have successfully morphed their style toward their artistic inclinations with positive results. U2 did with the brilliant 1991 LP, *Adieu Baby*, and continued in the same format until 1998's *Pop*, when they realized that not only were their albums getting quite boring and dull, but that they were also having to make charity donations out of their own pockets, rather than having their fans do it for them. Genesis started off as an art-rock group, but in the early 80s, they revamped their obscure art-noise to the more melodic and accessible art-rock of Phil Collins. In the 1990s, bands like Radiohead and *Spiritualized* tested their art-rock on the masses with overwhelmingly positive results. Albums like *OK Computer* and *Kid A* by Radiohead have become cornerstone recordings and the undisputed bibles of 21st century rock music. But the world seems to have missed out on one tiny band, from a tiny country but with one of the best albums in rock history - *Sigur Ros*.

*Sigur Ros* are the darlings of Iceland, its ambassadors to the world and after Bjork, its most famous contribution to the world of art and music. Their name roughly translates to "Victory

Rose" and their second album, 1995's *Agaetis Byrjun* translates to "Good Start". That's actually an understatement, because their start is simply fantastic! These lads are absolute pros at art-rock and have a discerning ear for thematic and sweeping symphonies that makes *Agaetis Byrjun* one of the most unique albums to come out in recent history.

Hailing this album as an "epic masterpiece" might sound a little presumptuous of me, but given the stellar quality of each sprawling track on this record, it's hard to resist doing so. Clocking in to just under 72 minutes, *Agaetis Byrjun* glides effortlessly from one song to the next, never sounding detached or out of place at any point. It has an ethereal tranquility that is bound to take the listener into a Zen-like state. Much like the sound of waves over the icy waste of the Arctic and the desolation of that area. These are the feelings that this album evokes in the listener. Credit for this also goes to vocalist Jon Thor Birgisson who sings in his own, made-up version of Icelandic that he calls "Hopelandic." His crooning vocals yearn to be one with the music and on tracks like *Starfari*, they indeed are.

Each track is marvelously executed and composed. The lead single from the album, *Svefn-genglar* is a soaring ten-minute rock symphony that takes almost 2 minutes to build up. Similarly, *Ví Rár Vel Til Loftasara* goes ballistic with the orchestration in attempting to rival Mozart and Beethoven. However, it is the magnificent *Olen Oken* that stands out among these ten stunning gems. The best moment on the album comes at the 4:51 minute mark of this track, when the band

throws in everything but the kitchen sink, to culminate into what is undoubtedly

the grandest celebration of life ever recorded. The album veers back to absolute bliss with the title track, which is perhaps the most straight forward track on the LP.

The music of *Sigur Ros* is a delightful hybrid of rock, jazz and European classical, and very bold for this young band. The band delves into the ambiguous territory of art-rock with extreme grace and dexterity, never hesitating to take the risk required to make the classic.

Though the band received global recognition for *Agaetis Byrjun* two full years after its release, it has built up quite a large following on both sides of the Atlantic. The album recently won the Virgin Shortlist Prize for Artistic Achievement, the American equivalent of the Mercury Prize of the UK, for *Agaetis Byrjun*, which despite its two year delay in global release, has been listed among the Top Ten of 2001, for many music publications.

Bands like *Sigur Ros* are constantly redefining the boundaries of contemporary music. This constant change and evolution could quite easily be termed as Art-Rock. Isn't art constantly changing? Ideas and concepts are subject to constant revision depending on our perception of the world. Perhaps, my question will always remain unanswered. Perhaps, one day the music of Britney Spears will be the new art-rock.... Ye Gad! What a horrible thought!



# The Majestic

Universal Music  
Rating HHH  
ANANT MATHUR

"The Majestic" may have been a painful exercise in overt sentimentality for most of today's audience, but for those who have lived through the golden 50s, it was a memorable experience. Frank Darabont managed to capture the essence of the 50s quite well, and like all period films gave it character by including the music of that era. The soundtrack, which is littered with swing, big band jazz and ragtime, is a breezy nostalgic trip that is both pleasing and worthy of praise.

Produced and arranged by the film's composer, Mark Isham, the soundtrack is a delightful jazz collection with re-workings of classics by Cole Porter by The Spencer Wyant Big Band. *Begin The Beguine* is the best of these. While some of the original compositions of The Spencer Wyant Big Band sound over-the-top and frankly too dated, their presence on this album is its real strength. In trying to evoke the sound of the 50s with the style of the ragtime of Scott Joplin, they've ended up treading the thorny path which, luckily for them, doesn't hurt all that much. Original recordings by Nat King Cole (the perennial *Orange Coloured Sky* and the sentimental *I Remember You*) are also featured in this collection. So is Chet Baker's excellent version of "Over the Rainbow" which suffers only due to its short play length.

The only flaw in this album is

the inclusion of the film score, composed by Mark Isham. After eleven tracks of jazz and swing, the three maudlin and ordinary pieces of film composition that Isham has included, sound out-of-place and, frankly, quite boring.

There have been very few period film soundtracks that have introduced a new generation to old and almost forgotten styles of music. The first of these was the soundtrack for "The Sting" in 1973. Marvin Hamlisch's reworkings of Scott Joplin classics such as *Pineapple Rag* were massive hits among the Baby Boomers, successfully making Joplin a household name and bringing posthumous critical acclaim to his work. The soundtrack for the Coen brother's tribute to Homer's *Odyssey*'s "O Brother Where Art Thou", has also had crossover success with its early twentieth century blue-grass music and has also been nominated for the category of Album of the Year at the 44th Annual Grammy® Awards.

If Mark Isham intended to have such crossover appeal with the soundtrack of "The Majestic," he should have used original and stripped down recordings of the tracks on this album. While the music on this album is by no means inferior and dull, it just does not have the shine that made it the rage all those years ago.

## HERALD SCALE

- HHHHH - Will not leave your CD player
- HHHH - A good addition to any collection
- HHH - Borrow it from a friend
- HH - Can double as a drink coaster
- H - Great for target practice

continued from page 6

something? Does it make you more desirable as a band? The Charlatans (or their marketers) seem to think so, noting this distinction in their advertising: "The Charlatans UK." Apparently, there was a 60s band in the U.S. called "The Charlatans", so without the clarification people may be confused...

The Kool Haus crowd wasn't there to see the opening act. Gee, I wish I would have known.... Suddenly, the room seemed filled

to capacity and the crowd surged and shifted forward as The Charlatans took to the stage.

The band has an eight-album career, spanning back to 1990, to their latest 2001 release, *Wonderland*. Lead singer Tim Burgess sang in a variety of vocal ranges, at times sounding like AC/DC lead-singer, Brian Johnson. I was half-expecting Burgess to launch into a rendition of "You Shook Me All Night Long," but thank God, it never happened. I was told The Charlatans sound like a Jamiroquai. I've only heard one

song by Jamiroquai (*Virtual Insanity*), years ago, which was in no way, sufficient or appropriate preparation for The Charlatans' performance.

As I strained to listen for the lyrics - I can't even tell you which songs they performed - hidden somewhere in the loud, layered sounds, I grew tired as those around me continued to "bop" their head and wave their hands, mimicking the enthusiastic gestures of Burgess. I soon began having horrible flashbacks to the George Clinton and Parliament

Funkadelics show I saw at the Bumbershoot arts festival in Seattle, WA, two years ago. Before the encore began, I was lined up for my coat. (Which was a good thing - imagine a coat check line for over 1,000 people).

Now in writing this review, I realize that the majority of readers (do we have readers?) are not going to run out and buy a ticket to Starsailor's next show. Or perhaps there are a few pissed-off people, that actually like The Charlatans... and quite frankly, I didn't... and they are therefore,

unsatisfied with my review. Oh well. Compare, as you like. Everyone's a critic.

For those that are interested, Starsailor is performing at The Phoenix February 28th.

interested in becoming an entertainment critic? email innisherald@yahoo.com for more details.  
deadline for next submission:  
**March 10**



# X versus Circle: The Showdown Between Ska Ska Oi and Mod Club

STEPHANIE SILVERMAN

It's the "punks" against the "rudies," the "suspenders" head to head with the "porkpie hats." In this epic battle, the winner stands on the dusty battlefield, proudly planting the flag of punk rock superstardom, proudly heralding the kids to come out and play. Yes, it's Ska Ska Oi contesting Mod Club and, unfortunately for such eclipsed stars as Duran Duran and the (International) Noise Conspiracy, it's the kids from the Anti-Racist Action (ARA) collective who will rise again triumphant.

Some of you may be scratching your head puzzled and wondering, who the hell are these people, and why you should care about their little turf battle. Well, you may not be aware of it, but our fair city has long been the site of a most prestigious and elongated battle between two groups of music enthusiasts. They may seem to all be members of the same happy family, but in the somewhat incestuous scene that is the Toronto punk/ska there is much food-slinging at this family dinner.

Every Wednesday at Lava Lounge and again on Saturdays at Revival, the Mod Club DJs, former members of 80s group, Platinium Blonde, bring you Mod Night. A Mod is a very confusing stereotype to explain unless you experience them yourself; some have even compared its explanation to that of the matrix. Essentially, a Mod is a "Modern Rock" enthusiast, but ironically the resurrection of this music genre has come way too late to still be termed "modern." Some purveyors of Mod music include the Specials, the English Beat, and their fans have been known to sport skinny ties and jagged haircuts. The entrance cover fee is five bucks and, in return, you get a circle stamp on your

hand and access to a very different music night. Recently, there has been a revival in this music, spearheaded by the DJs at Mod Club. Usually, the dance de rigueur involves standing around for a couple of hours sizing each other up, just trying to look good and stare down the younger and hipper folks. As a rule, the people who bear the brunt of the criticism are the "Mods" themselves — this is pretty ironic considering that Mod Club is their baby and supposedly, their music sanctuary. This routine continues until the club gets incredibly packed and then it is nearly impossible to dance, so the majority of the people stay in their evaluative positions until the end of the night.

On the other hand, once a year the (in)famous Anti-Racist Action group stages their traditional fundraiser, Ska Ska Oi. Evolving from its origins as an excuse for beer and loud music and turning into a dance with meaning, Ska Ska Oi attracted a very different crowd than the Mods. This crowd was much more diverse, and much more comfortable with said diversity. There were the uprooted punks, with the brand names and the impeccably gelled spikes, talking to the downtown kids with their ripped army pants and "wife-beater" tank tops, who were in turn sharing copies of *On The Prowl* (ARA's zine) with the eco-hippies with their patchouli-infused dreads. Plus — and here's the — kicker, they were all there for the (gasp) music and (gasp) the message. There were no fights, no shouting matches, hardly any cigarettes, and much "skanking" (a type of dance similar to swing but faster and edgier). The cover for this show was seven bucks, ten at the door, but it was worth it because all the money goes to a worthwhile cause, as opposed to a DJ, and you get a

huge "X" scrawled across your fist in case you have to later prove that you paid.

If nothing more need be compared, the superiority of the "X" over the circle is evident alone on the basis of the differences in the crowds. As earlier mentioned, the people at Ska Ska Oi were — contrary to popular demand — both punk and friendly. One hardcore girl in Chelsea pants and a Mohawk even gave a compliment to yours truly. In stark contrast, the Mod Club was filled with thirty-somethings in tapered jeans and teased hair, trying to meet others of their demographic while getting drunk and picking fights. No kidding; one woman tried to pick a fight, because she mistook a patient glance for a come-and-get-me look, but luckily Granny backed down. Aside from this farce, it was peculiar to bear witness to the mating patterns of people of my parents' generation who were more intent on looking down at the actual Mods than paying attention to the music that they had paid to hear. On top of that, there were the pretentious businesspeople, which obviously confused "Mod Club" for "Retro Night" and were sheepishly trying to appear hip while they sipped their Stella Artois. As my companion said upon careful consideration of the entire situation, "Ew — wrinkles!"

Thus, in the epic cage match that pits the Mods against the Punks, with Mod Club and Ska Ska Oi as their steel chairs, and the different crowds their tag-teams, the clear victor in this fight to the finish will be the ARA. Save your money and wait for the next ska show — unless your mom offers to take you to the new retro nights on Saturdays at Revival that she's been hearing so much about!

Usher

8701

LaFace Records

Rating: HHHHH



ALISON CHICK

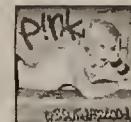
Usher Raymond has FINALLY arrived with his album. Usher has been nominated for the 2002 Grammy® Award for Best Male R&B Vocal Performance. With the sounds from friends P.Diddy, Jermaine Dupri and Babyface, this album is a wonderful mix and shows great variation to please any crowd. The album name represents the year that Usher first began to explore the world of music (1987) and how his music had grown by the year 2001. His videos incorporate great dancing skills, his sultry romantic songs make girls melt, and his hip-hop tracks are easy to party to. In *I Can't Let U Go* he establishes himself as the heartthrob of the music world. Usher has high energy and a wonderful vocal range that is absolutely stunning. His music is easy to listen to, fun, energetic and an absolute HIT.

Pink

Missundaztood

Arista Records

Rating: HHHH



ALISON CHICK

Pink has always spoken her mind and her attitude is clearly reflected in the songs she sings. In her album *Missundaztood*, she challenges convention and presents a very unique sound. Pink has really made a name for herself in the pop world. Glad that her days as a "Lady Matmalade" (*Moulin Rouge* soundtrack) are over — her new album brings back the Pink we knew from her debut *Can't Take Me Home*. With songs such as the radio friendly *Get The Party Started* and a collaboration with Aerosmith rocker Steven Tyler on *Misery*, makes this album a sultry mix of songs. The CD is bound to be a Pink fan pleaser.

Jewel

This Way

Atlantic Records

Rating: HHHH1/2



ALISON CHICK

Finally! Music that is truly artistic. After making fans wait three years, Jewel has released her newest album. She embraces many genres, with a mix of folk, country and alternative rock. Truly commendable is Jewel's ability to compose and write her own songs, with smart lyrics and contemplative thoughts on society today. With several solo acoustic tracks, Jewel displays her raw ability to sing and play. While the album is a must buy for Jewel fans, amateurs to her music may not enjoy or appreciate the talent and heart in the songs. In any case, it is good to have Jewel back in the music industry, who brings inspiring contemplations and music production that is uniquely her own.

## Soundtrack to The Royal Tenenbaums's Genius

Rating: HHHHH

JENNIFER SCOTT

Following the successful soundtracks to Bottle Rocket and Rushmore, The Royal Tenenbaums finds filmmaker Wes Anderson teaming up with Devo mastermind, Mark Mothersbaugh, to create a mesh of original instruments and painstakingly selected pop music. The result is an evocative mix tape of the kind record lovers craft for one another.

The Royal Tenenbaums tells the story of the Tenenbaum family — estranged husband and wife (Gene Hackman and Angelica Huston) and their three genius children (Gwyneth Paltrow, Ben Stiller, and Luke Wilson). Virtually all memory of the brilliance of the young Tenenbaums is subsequently erased by decades of betrayal, failure and disaster. The story then is of the family's unexpected reunion.

The soundtrack brilliantly captures the tone of dissolution and reunion throughout the movie. Of the soundtrack itself, Mothersbaugh remarked, "Unlike our previous collaborations, this is the first time he [Anderson] called me to discuss music as he was putting the script together. So, I was writing sketches based on the early

do the music as he was filming." Anderson then played the film's music on the set — much to the delight of the star-studded cast. "Everything was fleshed out each time he [played] a record," said Academy Award-winning actress Gwyneth Paltrow, who plays Margot Tenenbaum in the film. "All of a sudden, you know exactly the tone of each part of the film."

And for the most part, the tone is bittersweet. Where the soundtrack to Rushmore captured that film's mix of bash and bittersweet through British invasion obscurities, the music for The Royal Tenenbaums evokes the film's shabbily genteel New York through vintage folk-pop, classic punk, and Mothersbaugh's delicate and mature score. Two of the most affecting songs from Nico's *Chelsea Girl*, *These Days* and *The Fairest of the Seasons*, bookend the soundtrack as beautifully concise meditations on, respectively, regret ("Please don't confront me with my failures/I had not forgotten them") and hope ("Do I stay or do I go?/And maybe try another time").

In between the music ranges from Elliot Smith's quietly devastating *Needle in the Hay* to the maniac energy of the Ramones' *Judy is a Punk* and the Clash's *Police and Thieves* to the hazy glow of Bob Dylan's *Wigwam*, each

track adding to the album's strangely timeless but emotionally direct atmosphere.

Mothersbaugh's score and the compiled music

compliment each perfectly, with the essence of Nick Drake's *Fly* and the Velvet Underground's *Stephanie says* mirrored in the Mothersbaugh's Cannon and the Vince Guaraldi Trio's *Christmas Time is Here* echoed by I always wanted to be a Tenenbaum. The only disappointment was the absence of the Rolling Stones. During one of the film's most moving scenes where Margot and her brother Richie have a rip-out-your-heart-and-watch-it-shatter moment, the Stones' album *Behind the Buttons* is playing in the background. The inclusions of *She Smiled Sweetly* and *Ruby Tuesday* would have made the soundtrack a perfect ten.

Stones cast aside — the soundtrack to The Royal Tenenbaums is a bittersweet musical marvel. Nearly as clever and nuanced as the film itself, The Royal Tenenbaums is also a moving, well-rounded album in its own right.

# Suffering Combat Fatigue

BENJAMIN WRIGHT  
FILM EDITOR

Nor unlike its genteel cousin, *Saving Private Ryan*, the emboldened stars and stripes of Old Glory are stripped down to shades of metallic blue and blood red in *Black Hawk Down*. Director Ridley Scott fashions not so much a tribute, but rather a slice of combat life as per the events of 3 October 1993.

The film tells the story of the Battle of Mogadishu, adapted from Mark Bowden's streamlined non-fiction account of events that saw the deaths of 18 American combat specialists, 73 wounded, and countless other Somalian militia casualties. Unfortunately, the public's faded memory of the U.S. government's attempt to capture key Aidid militia members in the already blood-soaked region of Somalia in the early 90's goes without saying. Perhaps most potent were the devastating images broadcast on CNN of an American soldier being beaten and dragged through the streets of a sand-covered downtown Mogadishu.

What was to take 1 hour lasted a numbing 15, and Mr. Scott's two-hour-plus pic does not pause for a breath, a meal, or a reflective moment. Introduced to characters one minute, we watch their graphic demise in another. Of these characters, few have remnants of a personality, a family, or anything resembling a subjective existence. Instead, the resounding theme of the film is one of camaraderie against all odds. Not since the pleas of Medic Wade in *Saving Private Ryan* have we been subject to such a closeness of soldiers, of men. Put together in a situation out of their control, they are forced to remedy seemingly impossible situations with little more than a stick of gum and a prayer. And this is the binding attribute of *Black Hawk's* moral compass. These young, impressionable men, built in the shadow of John Wayne storming the Normandy beach, listen to Elvis Presley, spout army (and Hollywood war film) rhetoric, but share one thing: their professional immaturity.

Leading the pack of true and inspired characters is Matt Eversmann (played with over-stressed subtlety by teen-throb Josh Hartnett), a good-ol' boy who questions his involvement in what he calls "their war." Eversmann is surrounded by likeable yes-men who will no doubt each go through the mythical tripartite *departure-initiation-return* strategy that works so well in narrative fiction.

Owing much to the combat film of yesterday, the characters in *Black Hawk Down* strive to achieve a semblance to what has already been covered in war efforts like the already-mentioned *Ryan*, *The Thin Red Line*, *Platoon*, *Apocalypse Now*, and, to a lesser extent, *The Best Years of Our Lives*. The gruff can-do'er is played by army inept Tom Sizemore; the out-of-touch general is played with clumsy aplomb by Sam Shepard, who relies more on his misshapen teeth than his actual talent; and the gutsy soldier who's never seen a bloody nose is played by Brit-throb Ewan McGregor (with an altogether unimpressive mid-western accent).

In the history of the combat film have we ever really relied on the individualized, personalized

*Benjamin Wright and Caitlin McKenna exchange points of view on Ridley Scott's new combat spectacle*

## *Black Hawk Down*



CAUGHT UNAWARE: One of the U.S. Rangers avoids a barrage of bullets in *Black Hawk Down*.

accounts of the characters to further the impact of the story? Mostly, the group dynamic is what shines through these muddy, noisy wars.

Ridley Scott and producer Jerry Bruckheimer, no strangers to the loud-and-proud actioner, take surprising leaps and bounds forwards, and turn to the subject itself for ultimate drama and patient satisfaction. Unlike the glossy battle carnage of Mr. Bruckheimer's summer outing, *Pearl Harbor*, *Black Hawk Down* stuns in its horrifically graphic nature of the actual battle, which accounts for much of the film's action; over one-and-a-half-hours are devoted to the unfolding 15 hour debacle.

Painted in pungent hues of sandy browns and sky-blues, Slavomir Idziak's soulfully stunning photography captures an artistic and often poetic version of the day's events. Replacing the newsreel mentality with a poetic glossiness, Mr. Scott's camera never wavers in the line of fire. Capturing the effects of enemy gunfire and missile-fire at extremely close ranges, it is hard to ignore the technical mastery that is at hand. Which brings me to another point.

In its evolution, the war film has seen shifts in theme, but not in content or character. The enemy is still the faceless enemy of the past, and the good guys still listen to the rowdy tunes of Elvis and CCR. What has changed, however, is the technology behind the madness. From sand-blasting faux-Normandy's in battle pictures from the 1950s, to the surreal image of a Molotov cocktail dismembering a Kraut soldier in *Ryan*, the war film has seen a forging ahead in its ability to capture the realities and, in turn, atrocities of war. *Black Hawk* is no exception, pushing the envelope one technological step further. This time

out, Mr. Scott blends sleek, real-time aerial photography with enhanced effects that portray, on more than one occasion, the dismembering effects of an enemy grenade-launcher.

The face of the enemy is rarely glimpsed, but is given fleshly life by Hans Zimmer's taut score, aided by heavy tones that give gravity to the American-Somalian dichotomy. Strumming electric guitars are juxtaposed with the streamlined, percussive tribal sounds of East Africa.

In all its beauty, war is still hell, as Mr. Scott contends. Short on the heart and soul that would make this film great, the picture is a sobering exercise in fraternization. As one of the soldiers says early on, when a bullet grazes you, politics and everything else, for that matter, takes a back seat. B+

## ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE CAITLIN MCKENNA

*Black Hawk Down* has all the technical mastery, relentless violence and political depth of a well-made video game. It's a historical film without historical context; complex issues are painted in cartoonishly broad strokes that leave them muddled and obscured. It's a combat film without combatants; the paper-thin characters of Delta force never stand a chance against Ridley Scott's strutting cinematographic prowess and numbly incessant gunfire. *Black Hawk Down* makes *Saving Private Ryan* look like *My Dinner With Andre*; it's a soulless, relentless, two-hour-plus movie "experience" that leaves you bleary-eyed and exhilarated, but void of understanding of the 1993 Somali mission and the men who died in it.

Since its December release the film has re-

ignited the "What went wrong?" discussion around the U.S. government's 1993 action in Somalia. This humanitarian mission came to an abrupt end after 18 U.S. Rangers were killed in a firefight in the streets of Mogadishu. The fifteen-hour battle that took place that day is the subject of *Black Hawk Down*, and the film does succeed in conveying the terror, confusion, and ultimate bravery of the U.S. soldiers caught under fire. In aiming to take a political stance on those events, however, the filmmakers venture far beyond their ability. The result is the worst kind of historical reductionism.

The action opens with U.S. Rangers looking helplessly as henchmen of "local warlord" Mohammed Aidid intercept a shipment of international food aid, then open fire on a group of Somalis gathered there to receive it. The Rangers are told they cannot intervene—"UN regulations"—and return to their base angry and frustrated.

Immediately, the moral stage is set: Somali warlords are bad guys, Americans are good guys, and the middling bureaucrats at the UN are tying up the good guys in red tape. What could make more sense, then, than a quick and easy mission—circumventing the UN—to capture Aidid's top advisors as they met in Mogadishu market?

But the opening sequence distorts some key facts: first of all, the Mogadishu operation took place during the nation-building—not the humanitarian—portion of the US mission in Somalia. Aidid was to be "marginalized" because he wanted political power, not because he was blocking aid—in fact, the attack depicted at the movie's start is nowhere to be found in literature of the period. Also, killing Aidid would have pissed off—rather than relieved—most Somalis: the man was leader of the Habr Gidr, one of the largest ethnic groups in the region. The wisdom of eliminating political leaders in an already-unstable region is questionable at best, but Scott presents the action as if there were no alternative.

So what really went down that day? Why did the crowds turn on the U.S. soldiers when the choppers crashed? This question looms over *Black Hawk Down's* narrative without any resolution. It was an encounter earlier that summer that set the stage for the violence of October 3rd: on July 12, 1993, US and UN helicopters attacked a clan meeting of the Habr Gidr. Elders, poets, intellectuals—and many women and children—had gathered to discuss the latest UN peace proposition, and ended up in what the Washington Post dubbed a "slaughter".

Those killings mobilized support behind Aidid, and three months later, when the Black Hawks were felled, the U.S. soldiers were left to face that simmering anger. This view is absent from *Black Hawk Down*, however; all we see are hordes of chanting, murderous Somalis popping up and being shot dead like so many enemies in a Doom game.

Humanitarian intervention and nation-building, in short, are complicated. Reconstructing historical events is complicated. If Jerry Bruckheimer and Ridley Scott can't trust their viewers to think in shades of grey, they should stick to the world of fast cars and aliens from which they came. C

# A Meditative Moretti

Italian director Nanni Moretti leaves his sardonic self behind in the poignant drama *The Son's Room*

LEILAH AMBROSE

Nanni Moretti is ordinarily credited for his ambiguously political comedies. Considered one of Italy's finest contemporary minds, he has helped to turn the world's attention from the overshadowing influences of Italian neo-realism and the later comedies to a "new" film style. He writes, directs, and acts in his own work, not to mention owns his own production company.

Having such control over his films has meant Mr. Moretti a semi-autorite status not only within his national cinema, but also on the international stage. He may be described as more Fellini than Rossellini, yet he is entirely unlike either. His *Palombella Rosa* (1989) and *Car Diario* (1993), for example, are unconventionally structured, and hint at socio-political concerns while cleaving to Mr. Moretti's signature comedic vein.

To be honest though, I never really got him. I always appreciate when an artist undertakes all aspects of their art form, and, by all critical accounts, succeeds. Whether or not it was the narrative structure of his films, or the content of them, I could never shake the feeling that I wasn't invited to Mr. Moretti's critical festivities.

I'm not adverse to revising my views, however. Whether his newest offering, *The Son's Room*, will be an indication of a changing current in Mr. Moretti's filmography, or simply an experiment, I have renewed interest in his capabilities.

*The Son's Room* is a departure from Mr. Moretti's (un)usual style: it is infinitely linear,

comprehensive, and subtle. This unassuming yet poignant exploration of family, life and death is constructed with sophisticated portrayals of believable characters. It succeeds on so many levels, in fact, that it walked away with the highest honour at this year's Cannes Film Festival, the prestigious Palme d'Or.

The film opens with various glimpses at the fulfilling and successful life of Giovanni and his family. Giovanni is physically healthy, has a thriving psychological analyst's practice, and the love of a beautiful wife and two loving teenaged children. They eat breakfast together, work out together, and even sing together. The family unit's caring and honest nature becomes the focal point of the entire film. As in real life, the home life reaches into and affects all other areas of life. There is, therefore, very little which threatens the overall fulfillment which governs Giovanni's life. That is until one day, when a scuba accident claims the life of one of his children, and his world is thrown into tempestuous confusion, which the death of a child must occasion.

The most potent aspect of the film lies in its careful attention to the contrasts of life. Giovanni's professional career is intercut with his sessions with neurotics, perverts and depression sufferers, which only serve to heighten the impression of his own good fortune. This is subsequently interrupted by being unnaturally predeceased by his son, a loss so sudden that even the objectivity of a psychoanalyst is compromised. Similar editing techniques then serve to underscore Giovanni's building impression of senselessness in a world where death is so quick and unselective. Heart-breaking close-ups of a father's expressionless incomprehension are juxtaposed with the sounds of screws being driven into his son's coffin. Finally, a family's slow walk to resilience finds moments of quiet comic relief, which do not fight the overall tone of the film, but add to it instead.

The film is not heavy-handed, though the theme may suggest that it would be. Throughout his film, Mr. Moretti is careful to handle his subject with a feather's touch. The acting is controlled but heartfelt; each of the surviving members of the family is explored with painful close-up shots, which accentuate the subjectivity of the audience.

Mr. Moretti is particularly strong in his role, wisely restraining Giovanni's torment and confusion, natural for a character in his position. His supporting cast is equally strong, and equally restrained, working with a script which almost demands compliance with its low key approach to the material.

Mr. Moretti's film does not lurk on the particulars of the story. Every aspect of the grieving process is left ambiguously open, from the circumstances surrounding the death to the end of the film. For example, the members of the family are all depicted in broad terms, without reference to individual characteristics. It is not simply one man's battle with his son's death, but rather how a man might react to such a trauma. The fact that Giovanni begins to lose his professional objectivity in light of his loss is not something that he specifically would undergo. It is a metaphor for the devastation that even the most emotionally balanced mind experiences when tested. Equally, the circumstances in which the family is left at the end of the film seem to imply that the family will eventually choose life. The director is not trite enough to offer such an overt resolution to wounds which in all likelihood will never entirely heal. The story is therefore rather relevant to the September 11 attacks, which obviously left thousands of families bewildered and angry, but nonetheless faced with the inevitable facts of moving on in life. A

Sugary Christians and Sweet Sappiness



Jamie (Shane West) and Mandy (Mandy Moore) in *A Walk To Remember*.

# A Spectacular Spectacular on DVD

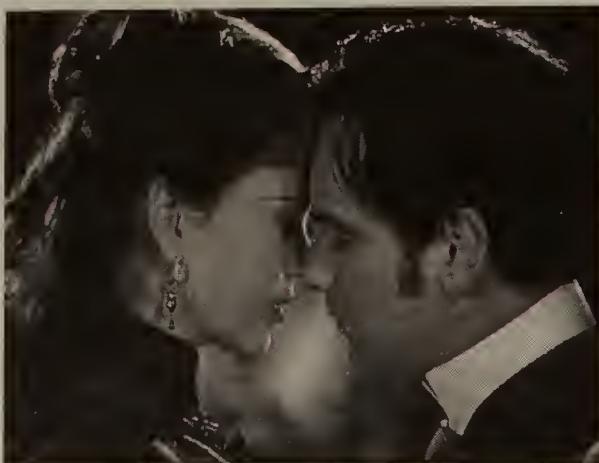
## VIDEO CORNER

BARI GOODIS

*With the release of Oscar-hopeful *Moulin Rouge* on DVD, many will get to see what they missed in the theatres and a whole lot more.*

If words could describe the musical extravaganza that is *Moulin Rouge*, then writer/director Baz Luhrmann has failed. *Moulin Rouge* is a film that needs to be experienced before it can be understood, and most people find that multiple viewings are required before they are truly able to grasp the film's many levels of meaning. From the outset, *Moulin Rouge* challenges the viewer to enter into the heightened razzle-dazzle world of nineteenth century Paris, while at the same time making them fully aware that the experience will require a certain degree of effort and participation on behalf of all parties concerned. As a spectator, if you are prepared to accept (what Mr. Luhrmann deems) "the film's contract" then you will revel in the film's intricacies and eccentricities. If "the contract" is rejected, you will likely be appalled by the film's use of 20<sup>th</sup> century love songs within, what appears to be, a 19<sup>th</sup> century environment.

*Moulin Rouge* tells the story of a young poet named Christian (Ewan McGregor) who comes to Paris in 1899 with hopes and dreams of writing about love - the only problem is that he has never been in love. After an unconscious Argentinean falls through his ceiling and a dwarf dressed as a nun (John Leguizamo as Toulouse-Lautrec) comes knocking on his door, Christian



Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman at the *Moulin Rouge*.

finds himself wrapped up in the world of the Bohemians. The Bohemians adopt Christian as one of their own and invite him to write their new play *Spectacular Spectacular*, which is to star the beautiful courtesan Satine (Nicole Kidman). In a classic case of mistaken identities, Satine confuses Christian for the rich Duke (Richard Roxburgh) whom she is supposed to seduce, and ends up (after her better judgment) falling in love with Christian. Satine is then forced to hide her feelings for Christian and pretends to fall in love with the Duke because he holds the deeds to the Moulin Rouge, and is generously financing the play that is to turn Satine into a star.

*Moulin Rouge* is the first DVD to have been

assembled exclusively by the film's production company (as opposed to the studio's promotional department). The 2-disc set comes complete with a stunning anamorphic 2:35:1 transfer, two feature-length commentaries, and an enhanced feature entitled *Behind the Red Curtain* which adds just over 22 minutes of behind-the-scenes footage to the film's total running time. When this feature is enabled, the green fairy pops up at random intervals throughout the film and by hitting enter on your remote control, a behind-the-scenes vignette will appear and explain how the scene that you just viewed was achieved. The film's second disc is chalk-full of extras including a 26-minute HBO special that is surprisingly

informative and considerably less promotional than the standard HBO special. The disc is then divided into seven sections ranging from featurettes on the film's music, dance, design, script, and marketing, as well as a section containing interviews with the film's stars. A feature called *The Cutting Room* provides the viewer with deleted scenes, abandoned footage and an especially amusing feature called *The Director's Mock Previsualisations (with apologies to the actors)* which demonstrates Mr. Luhrmann's method of rough editing and depicts Mr. Luhrmann himself doing impersonations of the cast as he plans how certain scenes will be arranged. Included on the disc are 10 Easter Eggs which, when discovered, provide the viewer with additional behind-the-scenes footage and material.

*Moulin Rouge* is one of those films that you will either love so dearly that you can't get enough of it, or you will hate it with a passion and wish that you had never crossed paths with it. It is a film that intentionally challenges the viewer and dares them to believe in the film's heightened world. It is an exercise in the exploration of truth through the artificiality and conventions of storytelling but, at the heart of the film, it is a story about love. As a DVD, *Moulin Rouge* is an absolute treasure and provides the viewer with countless hours of insightful and informative pleasure. It is quite possibly one of the best DVDs ever assembled and is a must-have for anyone who is able to love and appreciate this movie. A+

NEXT ISSUE:  
TOP TEN LISTS FOR THE YEAR IN FILM  
M.M. CHAMPAGNE RETURNS  
AND A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO THE  
EGLINTON THEATRE

## Animé: 'A Stirring Exercise in Imagination'

### *Metropolis*

LEILAH AMBROSE

The western hemisphere Japanese animation fan base is generally divided into two camps: those who appreciate it for its Hello Kitty or Pokémon kitsch, and the underground hardcore elite who can quote from *Evangelion*. More's the pity, because anime is capable of uniting the beauty of the image with the darkness of anti-Disney scripts, as exemplified in more mainstream releases such as *Akira* and *Ghost in the Shell*. The most recent offering to North American audiences, *Metropolis*, is similarly promising. Its oddly political narrative, coupled with its indecisive temporality and incredible graphics render *Metropolis* a stirring exercise in imagination.

The story was derived from Osamu Tezuka's manga comic written in the post-World War II years. He had experienced Fritz Lang's film of the same name, and sought to emulate its basic concepts with his own imagination. This is not to say that his version entirely lifted the story. Tezuka's *Metropolis* still considers the tensions between labour and machinery, but in a differ-

ent context. The narrative is far from simple: it begins with the unveiling of a super structure, which has been built by the ambitious and powerful Duke Red (voice of Taro Ishida). Duke Red is in fact, doing more than building a simple high rise: the structure is a weapon of mass destruction. On the side he is quietly funding the construction of a female robot humanoid, who will not only take the helm of the device, but also replace Duke Red's lost daughter.

Unfortunately, the Duke's overzealous adopted son, Rock (who is negatively inclined towards robots), undertakes to destroy her inventor and his factory. Detective Ban (Kousei Tomita) and his nephew Kenichi (Kei Kobayashi) arrive to arrest the inventor on other charges, but arrive in time to note his death and a mysterious and beautiful female wandering through the rubble. The rest of the film considers questions of the nature of artificial intelligence, a la *A.I.*, in which Kenichi and the girl flee the pursuing Rock through Metropolis, on the way falling in love and becoming indirectly involved in an underground Marxist labour rebellion.

Now this is the sort of narrative that one might expect from anime, and which only anime could really successfully pull off. It has had some of the greatest minds of the craft involved in its

conception. Tezuka was the guiding mind behind the old *Astro Boy*, one of the first commercially popular examples of the form. The screenplay was penned by Katsuhiro Otomo, who created and directed *Akira*, and it was directed by Rintaro, who was involved with *X* (and who also plays the bass clarinet in the soundtrack). This amalgam of creative forces, results in an stunning combination of computer imaging with the wide staring eyes and squat physiques which characterized the earliest *Astro Boy* figures.

In fact, this is the most notable aspect of the film: the tensions between the old and the new are apparent at just about every level. *Metropolis* itself is caught somewhere between the distant *Fifth Element*-esque future of monorail systems and robot workers, and the 1930s. Detectives in this world still wear fedoras, and the radio blares jazz. The big band jazz soundtrack, sometimes mixed with intense electronic backbeats, and even a Ray Charles song, does homage to the temporal mesh. Potential reasons for this lie in the era in which Tezuka was writing: a world torn between nostalgia and anticipation.

The film is therefore rather political, in a roundabout sort of way. The story concerning the female robot and Kenichi beg questions of humanity versus technology, while the subordinate story about the worker rebellion brings to



YOSHIO TEZUKA  
**METROPOLIS**

メトロポリス

mind the age-old considerations of the ramifications of convenience and progress. Regardless of all this, the film is wonderfully beautiful to watch, integrating all of those small details, which may only truly be appreciated with multiple viewing. Consider this together with a soundtrack which both opposes and supports the temporal surrealism, and you've come close to why this film is so fascinating. Narrative complications aside, just watching the screen and keeping your ears open alone justify the experience.

A-

# Who Needs Plot When You Have A Room Full of Scatterbrained Brits?



Maggie Smith (right) in *Gosford Park*

*Gosford Park*

JULIE MACARTHUR

Warning! This is not a murder mystery! Yes, there is a murder, but *Gosford Park*, Robert Altman's latest tour-de-force, barely notices it. Instead, the focus lies in the disparities between those who reside above the stairs, and those under the stairs.

An ensemble work that showcases some of Britain's greatest talents, this film takes a frame or two from Renoir's *La Régie de Jeu*. The action is set in a 1930's English country house for a weekend of parties, hunting and secrets. Upstairs are the aristocrats, headed by Maggie Smith, Kristen Scott Thomas and Michael Gambon. Downstairs are the servants, with Helen Mirren, Clive Owen, Emily Watson, Kelly Macdonald, and the list goes on.

For the first half of the film it is a comedy of manners, where those upstairs all gossip about themselves, those downstairs gossip about those upstairs, and the audience struggles to hold on to all the characters names and personal intrigues. To this point, there is no one plot line, rather each character holds his or her own story, which is loosely linked to others in the frame. Yes, there is a murder, and many have motive, but even this event late in the story does not provide a narrative anchor for the audience. The story continues with the development of the situation, rather than of plot or characters, and focuses on the internal structure of this hierarchical society, where even in the servant's quarters there is rank to be pulled.

With such a stellar cast, amazing performances abound, there are only a few who stand out. Maggie Smith as the Countess of Trentham plays perfectly and humorously an English snob with the gift of condescension mixed equally with biting wit. Stephen Fry delivers an added bonus as the bumbling Inspector. Even Ryan Phillippe offers an engaging performance as the only character to bridge the two sectors of society. However, the sheer magnitude of characters and storylines becomes the downfall of this film.

Although all the performances offered by this stacked cast are impressive, the multi-plots do not allow room for much development. A map is necessary to keep all the characters and their relation to others straight. Furthermore, none of the characters are given a privileged perspective, leaving the viewer without an attachment to any of them, although Kelly Macdonald's portrayal of Maggie Smith's maid comes close. The story ends as it begins, with everyone in their places, relatively unmoved and unchanged, including the audience.

With that said, Mr. Altman does produce a stylish look for this film, which harkens back to Hollywood's Classical era. There is a distinct evolution of great directors of the 1930s, Renoir as mentioned before and Orson Welles. His skill with framing and subtle touch with lighting and movement make this film easy to watch despite all the character confusion. This film suffers through its lack of coherence in plot and character, but shines with its superfluity of talents and wonderful directing. B-

## BY THE LETTERS

*The Critics' Corner presents a selection of recent releases and their letter grades as voted by the Herald's film critics.*



**Ali:** B

**A Beautiful Mind:** B

**Black Hawk Down:** B+

**Birthday Girl:** C+

**Gosford Park:** B-

**Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring: A [CRITICS' PICK]**

**Metropolis:** A-

**The Mothman Prophecies:** A-

**The Royal Tenenbaums:** A

**Slackers:** B

**The Son's Room:** A

**Vanilla Sky:** D+

**A Walk to Remember:** B

## A Cross-Cultural Mixup



Nicole Kidman and Ben Chaplin in *Birthday Girl*.

**Birthday Girl**

**TYLER GREENBERG**

*Birthday Girl* mixes comedy, and cross culture love with criminal intent.

Ben Chaplin plays (John) a bank clerk who has a penchant for the lackluster. Complimented but never upgraded he seeks something beyond his grasp: Love.

Going online he finds his Russian love, one far beyond his expectations. Internet-ordered-wife Nadia (played by Nicole Kidman) is both sultry and seductive in her new environment. Ms. Kidman fills her role, but she is more reminiscent of a junkie, than a Russian. Nadia lacks any English comprehension skills, which is made up by her masterful abilities in bed. John meanwhile is desperate to rid himself of Nadia due to her lacking language skills, but his lust for her boundless abilities makes him relinquish this desire and soon he falls for her.

As love begins, tension rises and trust falters. Nadia's pals from the old country arrive at John's door seeking shelter and food or so John believes. John is soon sent running to save his life, dignity, and ultimately to understand his emotions for mysterious Nadia.

*Birthday Girl* lacks bravado. Arrogance and ego are often more suitable traits than humbleness in a director. Competent, but never ingenious it lingers on ones mouth without ever satisfying. Sometimes melodramatic, at other times humorous, but never going all the way with either. The script places a lot of responsibility on us, the viewers, for understanding and belief. These understanding gaps are never too large however. One can understand John's descent to falling in love with the lusty Nadia, but why would she fall for him? Certainly it isn't for his conservative graces, emotionless glances, and thankless nature.

Directed by Jez Butterworth, and co-written by brother Tom, *Birthday Girl* lacks an intuitive nature necessary to pull the audience in. It is a neutral film, neither engaging nor boring. Mr. J. Butterworth's second film shows a promising career if he gains a bit more confidence.

This cocktail falls short on the content required to give us a buzz. C+

## So Long, Uncle Cam!

Continued from Front Page

these two that the University of Toronto can now enjoy a relationship with studios such as Warner Brothers, which puts on preview screenings at Innis Town Hall, as well as lends the College valuable 35 mm prints for screenings.

Alumni Mike Marano claims, "Cam was the one who convinced me to take Cinema Studies, one of my most relevant decisions in my university career."

Professor Tolton is not only a hero to the students, but to the faculty as well. Professor Charlie Keil, was a student in Professor Tolton's *Intro to Film* class at Victoria College. At that time, Professor Keil was an English major. He, too, went on to take the *American Film: Sound to Cinemascope* class. At Cam's suggestion, after his graduation, Charlie Keil became a marker for Ban Testa, who at that time was a TA for the *Intro class*.

Professor Keil went on to the prestigious Graduate Cinema Studies program at Wisconsin-Madison, under the tutelage of David Bordwell, and returned to Toronto, where he received an invitation from Professor Tolton to teach the Introduction class while he was away. Professor Keil puts forth this statement: "Without Cam, I would not have become a Professor. He was instrumental to my well-being academically."

Another figure who interacted with Professor Tolton was the well-known Canadian director, Norman Jewison. Cam harkens back to the time when Norman Jewison held a series of lectures at Victoria College, "with no 35 mm, screening facilities on campus then, we used the Cumberland Theatre donated by Famous Players for the occasion. A lot of time was spent as a result with some of the speakers: Joseph L. Mankiewicz, Robert Wise, Edward Dmytryk and, of course, Norman himself who has always been a generous friend of the Cinema Studies Program. Note, for instance, the Norman Jewison Fellowship."

In regards to the future of the program, he comments, "the staff we do have is marvelous, but the number of enthusiastic students we have justifies a larger teaching staff. The result would be an even greater number of course options and smaller classes for the students. Also, it should be made easier to hire candidates with doctorates in Cinema Studies as a discipline in itself rather than scholars with divided interests as the current rules demand. The students deserve the best."

Cam's love and enthusiasm not only for his material but also for his students is probably what made the growing popularity of the Cinema Studies Program what it is today. He did everything from giving the students juicy facts on the behind-the-scenes world of Hollywood and academia, to having students over at his home to enjoy his basement home theatre, to believing in students and encouraging them to be inventive with their projects while giving much-needed and respected constructive criticism.

This past spring, the University did not only lose a great teacher, but a father figure who made the classroom a family experience, bonding students together as well as with the faculty. Cam Tolton certainly made everyone's experience with the University, celebrities and students alike, memorable. I still remember the material I studied for his final exam, but I mostly remember Uncle Cam.

## What's Coming Through Is Alive



It's the time of year where people are confronted with the consequences of their poor time management skills. Formal and Valentine's Day are also vaguely current events, with the latter being addressed and the former not so much. Some moderately interesting events took place in both the news and in the Opinion section editor's life. Moderately may be an overstatement in both regards, but most people aren't interesting or interested unless booze is involved. Here they are then: the editor received a new bed, and vaguely committed himself to the role of wheelman for an ill-conceived trip to New Jersey this coming July. While these events may cause some to accuse the editor of succumbing to petty-bourgeois sentiments or engaging in actions beyond the realm of summary conviction offenses, they need not be concerned. Neither militancy nor radicalism have been compromised.

Obviously, the response to legitimate topics in the section has been nonexistent (doesn't anyone want to tell the editor what he can do with his opinions?), and the submissions from people not personally asked to write are also declining. While the above mentioned factors may explain the decline, the editor only knows of two things to do: 1) again ask people to write about local (regarding the university), provincial, or even national events 2) writing provocative articles to try and offend readers' sensibilities so much that they are compelled to respond. Innis Students, please write for the opinion section. The latter tactic is clearly being used this month. While this one-two punch has never worked, one more round is called for (as was the case with Rocky).

So what of current events not addressed by opinion pieces this month? A set of unexplained opinions seems in order: the provincial leadership race is filled with undesirable candidates; the Canadian Alliance leadership race is filled with undesirable candidates; Art Eggleton should resign, but won't since the Chretien Liberals have no integrity, the assertion that Iran, Iraq, and North Korea form an 'axis of evil' is as ignorant as it is irresponsible; the Prime Minister should spend less time criticizing others and more time being a leader (of course, inertia is his only option); the 'unlawful combatants' label for prisoners is totally invalid and a reminder of the total lie that is human rights as a motivation for US policy.

Something should have offended someone in that trade. Until next month, there will be those citizens who question authority, and those how adhere to it like the salivating dogs they are...

## The Truth About Love, Cupid, and Sacrificing Goats



JENNIFER SCOTT

There is no doubt about it; I hate Valentine's Day. Everyone runs around frothing at the mouth proclaiming their love and pledging their eternal allegiance to one another. Oh, it all seems so contrived and horribly transparent. In my humble opinion (can I say humble and truly be humble?), if someone truly cared about someone else I think you'd hear it more often than once a year in the presentation of a heart shaped cardboard box picked up at Shopper's Drug Mart filled with cheap chocolates made of oil and lard, and a trite card for the cool price of \$2.95. This ridiculous gesture supposedly covers all wrongs in the relationship with one fell swoop, leaving the giver forgiven for all sins committed within the relationship.

I know, I know . . . Now you all think I'm a horrible wretch bent on giving grief to anyone who is happy with their significant other. But please, don't misunderstand me. There is someone who means a great deal to me (dare I say a beau?). I love flowers, and silly romantic things can make even the toughest hearts, like mine, swoon. I merely want to know why everyone feels obligated to turn into Romeo and/or Juliet every year on February fourteenth, and why those souls who are unattached are made to feel like they are some kind of grotesque loser (clearly only "winners" get to be in relationships).

So, where does Valentine's Day come from? For the answer please see your local Christian or Pagan minister.

Today the Catholic Church recognizes three different saints named Valentine all of whom were martyred. One legend contends that Valentine was a priest who served during the third century in Rome. When Emperor Claudius II, with his emperor-like intelligence, decided that men who were unattached made better soldiers and decreed marriage unlawful, Valentine continued to perform marriages for young lovers in secret. When Valentine's actions were discovered, Claudius sentenced him to death.

Another legend holds that Valentine actually sent the first Valentine greeting himself. It is believed that while in prison Valentine fell in love with the jailer's daughter. Before his death, it is alleged that he wrote her a letter, which he signed, 'From your Valentine.'

Why February is the month of choice is as unclear as the identity of the real Valentine. Some believe it is celebrated in the middle of February to commemorate the anniversary of Valentine's death, others claim that the Christian church may have decided to celebrate in February in an effort to 'christianize' celebrations of the pagan Lupercalia festival. This time in ancient Rome was considered one of purification. In this fertility festival dedicated to the Roman god of agriculture a goat was sacrificed for fertility and a dog for purification. All the young

women in the city would place their names in a big urn. The city's bachelors would then each choose a name out of the urn and become paired for the year with his chosen woman, or 'Valentine' if you will. Not so much like the candied hearts we give out today, is it?

In Great Britain, Valentine's Day began to be popularly celebrated around the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, printed cards began to appear. In the 1840's, Esther A. Howland began to sell the first mass produced valentines in America. Today, according to the Greeting Card Association, an estimated one billion valentine cards are sent annually, making it the second largest card-sending holiday of the year, next to Christmas.

Alas, with only a short time left before the dreaded event, I reflect on the history of this day and feel my stomach churn. Celebrating Valentine's Day with your significant other seems almost dumb. If it weren't a day of obligations for anyone within a fifty-mile radius of a fuzzy stuffed heart to run out and purchase it for their beloved, I might view it differently. I mean, everyone loves getting gifts. I love getting gifts. But it's getting a gift that really, really means something that touches the heart. More often than not, the gift you get on this day of sick public displays of affection are nothing more than a little something to say you've upheld your end of the bargain and have fulfilled your duties. I want someone to tell me I'm loved of their own volition, not because some fabricated greeting card holiday sponsored by Hallmark compels them.

This Valentine's Day I made a solemn promise to a dear friend (a couple of dear friends in fact) to join the Lonely Hearts Club Band and wash away my sorrows, or at least their sorrows, at the local tavern. So, cheers to a night filled with laughter and friends, something so appreciated that there doesn't need to be a day on the calendar to celebrate it.

*Jennifer is a 1<sup>st</sup> year Innis student studying Criminology.*

## Juxtaposition Inquisition

STEVEN JUG

Calm has settled over the 'war on terror' in recent days, and it is likely to be followed by a storm of new and likely illegal US air strikes. Even now US military intervention in the Philippines (a former imperial possession of the US, still part of the US sphere of influence in the Pacific through neo-colonial means) is underway on a small scale. In this period of relative calm, when life has returned to the monotonous, mind-numbing routines of old, and the jingoists and militarists in the media have calmed down, it seems appropriate to examine the ostensible battle of 'good versus evil' that Canadian soldiers are taking part in. The very idea of such 'revisionism' is anathema to the blind obedience of American apologists and social-chauvinists alike, but the facts it presents are no less true. The idea of juxtaposing the images as seen below, and the comparison of intent and morality involved are not new, but are certainly worth readdressing as Iran, Iraq, and North Korea are potential targets of future US military action. Obviously, these states are not desirable places to live, and an end to the dictatorial regimes in Iraq and North Korea would be supported by a large number of the people living in each country.

The issue raised here is that of the façade of human rights and democracy constantly used by the US to disguise actions taken exclusively for reasons of its business interests. Normally, security and economic interests are those which are alleged to be the chief policy motivation, but US security is not threatened by the ignorantly dubbed 'axis of evil', only oil and related business interests.

The list of murderous attacks on other states (euphemistically termed 'interventions' in modern times) is long and varied, but a consistent theme runs through them: fabricated goals (defence of democracy and human rights chief among them) used to disguise the pursuit of economic and power interests at the cost of countless human lives. Such are the unpleasant manifestations of militaristic imperialism. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, little or no excuse was given, since the great European Empires had no trouble understanding the aggression of their American cousin across the ocean. The Cold War provided an excellent excuse for numerous actions that supported dictators and their brutal regimes. In more recent times since the Cold War's end, more creative excuses were necessary in order to replace the monolithic communist boogeyman. And so began the new era of illegitimate claims that defending freedom and human rights were the overwhelming priority in US foreign policy.

For those incredulous readers, a few instances may be helpful. An example of the multitude of US invasions of other countries in the Western hemisphere is the 1915 invasion of Haiti. When the Haitian people rebelled against the bloody dictatorship of Vilbrun Sam, President Woodrow Wilson (ironically known as an idealist in global politics) sent in US troops to put down the rebellion. The deaths of 2000 Haitians resulted from the pursuit of US banking interests, and the country came under US control because of the invasion.

During the Cold War, the proxy wars fought against the rival Soviet Empire were characterized as being undertaken to defend the free world from communist aggression, even though South Korea was a dictatorship and the Vietnam War resulted from America's refusal to hold elections that their puppet dictator in the South would not win. Of course there are numerous invasions of South American states and African conflicts that cannot be mentioned in detail, but the similarity is clear enough.

Most striking have been the interventions since the end of the Cold War, since the illegitimacy of the excuses has been evident in recent years. The Persian Gulf War of 1991, where the US lead a coalition to defend its oil interests in the Middle East, was explained as an observance of the principles of collective security and the reversal of Kuwait's subjugation by a dictatorial regime. Of course, that explanation obscures the facts that Saddam Hussein was put in power in Iraq (as a dictator) by the US as a moderate counterweight to Fundamentalist Iran. In addition to providing Iraq with arms and funding, the US actively intervened on the side of Iraq in the mid-eighties during the Iran-Iraq War. There is also the fact that Kuwait is something less than a free country, as women cannot vote, and only ten percent of its citizens are eligible to vote at all. Truly, freedom was not involved in the Persian Gulf War.



Equally abhorrent two images of mass murder in recent times

Finally, there is the example of the 'War in Kosovo' that took place near the end of the last century. It is also the basis of the juxtaposition of images above. The US bombing campaign devastated Serbia and killed thousands of civilians in Serbia. The campaign also violated the fundamental principles of international law. The ultimate goal of it was to aid a terrorist organization known for selling drugs and illegal weapons in order to continue an insurrection. What a difference a few years makes. The US was so concerned for the human rights of Kosovars that it would not intervene with its own soldiers in Kosovo to stop the criminal actions of Serbian paramilitaries, but instead cause an escalation of the crimes by bombing civilians who had nothing to do with the government's actions. There must be some irony hiding in there somewhere.

If the US were really going to pursue a moral foreign policy, and further the cause of human rights globally, the world would undoubtedly benefit. But the US has never done so, and is again reverting to its reliable crutch of human rights to justify aggression and oppression. The historical pattern of US aggression is being continued by the current leadership, as is the time-honoured tradition of disguising the immoral reasons for it.

If the US and its leadership are actually concerned about human rights and democracy, the larger question is not of the motivation of its actions in the world, but of its inaction. Untold human suffering could be prevented if not for the limitless greed of the powerful, and if the US did not turn a blind eye to or actively support brutal and corrupt regimes to further economic interests. Over 30000 children starve every day of the year, but that is not a tragedy occupying the attention of the American media, nor does it dictate a foreign policy of 'infinite justice'. Such is the hollowness of the American government's morality.

*Steven is a 3<sup>rd</sup> year Innis student studying history and Russian language and literature.*

## Cherewaty & Glitterati II

A dialogue by Steve Byzantine

3/6/2000

*Buster:* Maybe mawj is dead. I could see him getting killed at York. It's a rough school. No place for mawj.  
*Techie:* That's true. Mawj probably talked shit to the wrong dudes.

*Buster:* I see....

*Techie:* No, you are just trying to get away with being a big chump

3/8/00

*Techie:* Hey dopey, quit smoking' the dope for a minute

3/9/00

*Buster:* One day till mission to mars

*Techie:* That's right you son of a bitch.

*Buster:* Temper temper mon capitan

*Buster:* Now that I think of it, I think Mickey got the best nickname. It'd be a cool band name, or something like Dj Mickey. Better than Dj



Rockulus learns of Freemasons and free lunches

Side-O or Dj Walrus. How's that rapsallion Bostolosaurus??

3/13/00

*Techie:* Well you're living quite the life. How's Huge Euge?

*Buster:* He's alright....haven't talked wit him in a while....I think he is assembling an army of animals to do his bidding....

*Techie:* Now isn't that giving him a lot of credit?

*Buster:* Yeah, but I can't figure out why else he would be getting all these ducks, geese, chickens, etc...

*Techie:* Oh no. He'll probably going to feed them to the fat fat posse

3/21/00

*Buster:* yo assface what up

*Techie:* damn. You keep gettin' uglier.

*Buster:* you thought I was cute?

*Techie:* no, was speaking of your decent from a previous level of gender-transcending ugliness.

*Buster:* ha. Ha ha. Funny. So whasup?

*Techie:* well isn't that convenient. I'll see that

Bostolosaurus kid, and ask him when he's done.

*Buster:* cool...I talked to that Side-o character and his co-op is in St. Catharine's this summer. What a chump ass. What the hell is in St. Catharine's? Do anything else of consequence this weekend?

*Techie:* Why doesn't he just crawl into a hole and die. All those Brock bitches and St. Catherine's strippers will be the end of him. **Bostolosaurus is AWOL, that's Absent Without Official Leave.**

*Buster:* yeah, I know what awl stands for. I don't even know where St. Catharine's is. I think my sister went to Brock for a while....

*Techie:* St. Catherine's is by Niagara Falls dude. We went to the Fresco peanut cafe. It was delicious.

*Buster:* bastards! I haven't been there for years.....

*Techie:* that's the spirit. Now burn them Buster, burn them all!

*Buster:* nighty night Skip. See ya tomorrow, asso.

*Techie:* sure thing, you crypto-Marxist

*Cherewaty and Glitterati is the perpetual back-up plan when submissions aren't forthcoming.*

# Rationalization: Just an Excuse or the Path to Enlightenment?

JULIA MACARTHUR

The word vice is defined by the Oxford Canadian English Dictionary as "illegal or grossly immoral conduct; extreme corruption or depravity", "a particular form of this [especially] involving prostitution or drugs, etc.", "an immoral, dissolute, or illegal habit or practice", and "a defect in character or behaviour; a personal flaw or bad habit".

Coffee originates in Ethiopia. People spend hours roasting coffee beans over a fire, grinding the blackened coffee by hand with a stone mortar and pestle, brewing the grounds with water in copper pots over coals that are kept smoldering with their breath. The beverage is served in teacups, so strong that it looks thick, and is drunk without adding any condiments. This is the ritual of coffee, practiced in the evening, lasting for an hour or longer.

My ritualistic coffee drinking differs from the original method. When I wake up in the morning, I immediately go to my kitchen and set eight cups of coffee brewing. Then I go to the washroom, and then I get dressed. By this time the carafe is full and I pour my coffee into my mug adding cream and sugar, and stirring in an anticipation that always makes me think of the witches of Macbeth surrounding their cauldron full of eye of newt and salamander tails.

I know a woman who smokes her first cigarette of the day on the toilet. "That," she says, "is an addiction." A long-term smoker lighting up the first cigarette of the day enjoys an intense and not altogether asexual experience. Wise people and self-help books declare that happiness comes from the small pleasures in life. I know many people who have accepted their smoking habits, despite the peril in which they knowingly put their health, because it brings them satisfaction. Is this a cover up of their lack of self-control? Is their pleasure derived from succumbing to the chemical addiction? What is the smoker's precise Pavlovian reaction to the forcing of nicotine through the body?

I am about to subject myself to this self-experiment to discover the virtue in vice. Can I consciously adopt tiny ritualistic indulgences on a daily basis to develop a broad base of happiness and/or personal satisfaction? Humans are creatures of habit. People have the tendency to sit on the same side of the lecture hall or theatre, to eat at the same time each day, to pick a washroom stall and stick with it for the duration of the evening. Weddings and funerals are traps that allow people to move through life-altering events without having to fully consider what it is they are doing. The human body, like an automobile, comes equipped with automatic life saving mechanisms, such as tears, unconsciousness, and second lungs and kidneys to preserve it. Albert Einstein wore the same outfit everyday, so he would not have to think about what he would wear in the morning. There is relief and



comfort in falling back on old routines or habits just as there is a connection between them. If humans could manipulate their vices into forms of fulfillment, no one would have to publish self-help books ever again.

Is there a difference between habit, tradition and ritual? Between vice, obsession and addiction? Or are they simply varying degrees of the same things? Can a twenty year old woman find the same pleasure in a cup of coffee for \$1.35 that an infant finds in a mother's breast? And is this unhealthy? Or is it enjoyment?

*Julia is a 2<sup>nd</sup> year Innis Student indulging in English and History on a daily basis.*

## The Chief Task of Our Day

STEVEN JUG

The World Economic Forum was held in New York in recent weeks, and the paid invitation-only meetings were attended by street protests of thousands of American and Canadian citizens. Typically, the corporate media covered the protests in an unprofessional and biased manner. The number of protesters in attendance was underreported (only 7000 instead of 15000), and numerous incidents of police brutality and arbitrary arrests were omitted entirely. 200 activists were arrested during the seven days of the Forum, and a class action lawsuit is pending against the NYPD for unlawful arrest and brutality. This only a week after a \$469000 settlement was awarded to 12 protesters who sued the police for their mistreatment during a previous protest. None of which appears in the news, so the public will not know what actually goes on, and the protesters can be dismissed as a mob of unruly students and radicals. Over 60000 activists, students, and free thinkers met at the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, held at the same time as the WEF. Those attending the WSF discussed various alternatives to corporate globalization and to current social, economic, and political structures imposed by industrialized states on the entire world. The WSF received scarcely any coverage in the mass media; alternatives to the status quo are not something corporations want the public to know about.

The protests and rallies lacked the drama and excitement of the famous events of the 1999 anti-WTO protests in Seattle, but were no less important. The idea that corporate elites and their global crimes should be tolerated after the terrorist attacks was rightly rejected, and the message that people will continue to scrutinize the actions of unaccountable corporations was clearly sent. In the lull between meetings of the corporate elite, it is worthwhile to reflect on the necessity of popular activism and protest.

The two perspectives to be examined are contemporary and historical. That is, current reasons why activism is vital to society and historical reasons why activism is an effective method of popular expression that supplements sporadic and limited occasions offered by voting to change the enduring power structure. At present, there are numerous reasons to become active in the community, ranging from the steady increase of child poverty, the continuing lack of affordable housing in the city, or the unaccountable actions of various levels of government. These issues are ignored by the various levels of government, and the only way

this will change is if popular protests force the government to act for fear of losing power. As most of these issues are sure to be unimportant to self-absorbed, self-loving, and generally conformist young people (a description of Innis students?), an issue with the potential to immediately impact the lives of students has arisen: tuition deregulation. Deregulation of tuition of course means the increase of tuition fees (the free market in action), which will impact a vast majority of students in a negative way (but not those insulated by their parents' money). While rallies have already occurred, more are sure to be held, and more student participation is needed if the fat cats at Queen's Park and in Ottawa are going to get the message. This is a cause that students can find little excuse to disregard, since its effect is so personal. The reader will likely respond to this call to action by thinking 'I'm only one person, I can't make a difference', but that is a lie people are trained to believe. It is with this lie that our culture perpetuates itself, along with an invalid sense of individuality people are trained to adopt. Really, one person can have quite an impact, notably if they can capture the attention of the media, but those who have the courage and the sense to join with others in fighting for a cause are the most likely to succeed. Immense change has been brought about in this way, and popular causes that mobilize large numbers have achieved much. Evidence of which is provided by the historical perspective.

While the examples of popularly initiated change are numerous, and include numerous revolutions around the world, some successes of 20<sup>th</sup> century North America may be the most helpful. In 1933, FDR launched the New Deal to create jobs and end the depression; what is less widely known is: the march of Veterans on Washington under his predecessor; the 400000 textile workers on strike nationwide in '33; San Francisco paralyzed by striking longshoremen; all examples of people sending a message (heard clearly by FDR) that they would not tolerate more of the same, and that change was going to happen, either from above or from below. From the labour victory in the 1937 Oshawa strike against General Motors until 1944, organized labour began its last and ultimately successful struggle for legislated compulsory recognition of collective bargaining. Labour unrest beginning in the depression reached a level in 1943 that the government could no longer ignore, and labour gained the legal recognition and rights it sought. The Civil Rights movement is another example of protest that forced government to make changes that were overdue, ranging from student protests and sit-ins to the storied work of Martin Luther King, Jr. Popular action has had a significant and indispensable impact on democracy here and in the US. It will continue to do so in the future.

When people do nothing we get: one in five children in Canada living in poverty; 32000 children starving to death worldwide every day; a recent study conducted for the US congress found that the wage gap between men and women in the same positions has been increasing since 1995. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century women have still not attained the equality they deserve. Such realities highlight the fact that the price of inaction is too high, and will only get higher.

contribute to the innis herald's last issue of the 2001-2002 school year!

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